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MEMOIRS
OF GENERAL DE
CAULAINCOURT
DUKE OF VICENZA

VOLUME THREE

THE ABDICATION
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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

ON April 15, 1813, Napoleon and Caulaincourt left Paris in a carriage to join the Army at Mayence. Four months had elapsed since they had completed the long and dangerous journey from Russia narrated in the previous volumes of these Memoirs, leaving to follow them an army that suffered a daily loss of thousands from cold and hunger. Now the Emperor was opening another campaign, that was to end at Leipzig. Caulaincourt's duties during the German campaign were exceptionally heavy. Duroc was killed at Bautzen and his duties of Grand Marshal were added to Caulaincourt's own as Master of the Horse. In addition to this, he had to take the place of Foreign Minister at Imperial Headquarters. Theoretically all diplomatic papers passed through his hands, but in reality he was little more than an over-worked clerk, for the Emperor dealt with every matter himself and dictated practically every despatch.

On May 17, however, Napoleon directed Caulaincourt to leave all his other duties and go to Neudorff to open up negotiations with the Russians and Austrians. As a preliminary step an armistice was agreed upon, and in due course the Congress of Prague came into being. It was the first occasion on which Napoleon had appeared in the guise of a suppliant, and it was a day of triumph for the Allies. But they proposed terms so harsh and unacceptable that negotiations were broken off and hostilities recommenced with as little delay as possible. Caulaincourt hurried back to the Emperor, to ride by his side throughout the tragic day of Leipzig.

After this disaster Napoleon hastened to Paris where he ordered Caulaincourt to take over Foreign Affairs from Talleyrand, for that wily statesman saw the end of the Empire approaching and Napoleon knew he was already plotting to put himself right with the victors. For victors the Allies were—their armies already marching across the sacred soil of France, and Paris already awaiting their advance guards.

On June 20 Caulaincourt received a letter from Metternich inviting him to a Congress to be held at Châtillon to discuss the fate of France—and of Napoleon. It is with that Congress that this volume of his Memoirs opens.

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CHAPTER I

The Congress of Châtillon

THE break-up of the Congress was inevitable.[1] I had long anticipated this, and had foretold it to the Emperor, who, deceiving himself with his habitual and unhappy illusions, was doubtless unwilling to believe it. He kept flattering himself that a military success would drive the enemy away from the capital; that after the enemy had had the slightest reverse, the exasperation and courage of the citizens would force a withdrawal from France. He wrote to the Emperor of Austria,[2] and he had the Prince of Neuchâtel write to Prince Schwarzenberg, as though the negotiations were being held a hundred and fifty leagues from Paris; as though there were some hope of disuniting Powers that had been brought together by a common peril, regardless of any concern other than to escape from the supremacy and sway of the Cabinet of the Tuileries.

His letter to his father-in-law, wherein he harked back to his old and just grievances against England, and declared that

[1] It was not the Duke of Vicenza's intention that the pages immediately following should serve as a history of the Congress of Châtillon. Consequently, he has not limited himself to the strict order of events. He anticipates some happenings and refers repeatedly to others. His sole wish was to reveal the springs of his action; to show the difficulties which confronted him, and the attitude which Napoleon's orders compelled him to assume.—For a more conventional treatment of the days February 5–29, 1814, see: August Fournier, *Der Congress von Châtillon*; or the works of Albert Sorel, Gabriel Hanotaux, Charles Dupuy, Louis Madelin, Debidour, and Driault.

[2] Letter dated February 21 (*Correspondance de Napoléon*, 21344). Napoleon proposed to his father-in-law that peace be concluded on the bases laid down earlier at Frankfurt: terms which would have allowed France the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees as her "natural frontiers."

he would never consent to any sacrifices other than those demanded at Frankfurt, had produced a bad effect. The Emperor of Austria and M. de Metternich, as they have repeated to me several times since then, saw proof, in the phrase about England,[1] that his claims were unaltered; and from this they concluded that he did not wish peace. Dissatisfied that the Emperor Napoleon took no account of the inconceivable declaration by which the Powers had announced, since the first conference at Châtillon, that they would adhere to the declaration of the British Government—or, rather, perhaps, to all its claims—the Emperor of Austria and M. de Metternich regarded this interminable maritime question as a mere pretext for prolonging still further the ten years' war of which it had been the cause, whether secret or avowed.

As M. de Metternich put it, everyone knew that England could not give way on this question, which for her was a matter of life and death. The Powers had found themselves compelled to choose between two overwhelming rivals. For the moment, they could see only the most pressing dangers and the state of uneasiness which, for some time past, had resulted from the Emperor's ambition and the wars which had exhausted the Continent. Naturally, they preferred England, who had furnished subsidies for the Coalition, who at this moment had made common cause with them, and who could not weigh upon any of their commercial interests until a far-distant future. It was bound to be so; and at heart the Emperor Napoleon could not have doubted this result.

Russia alone found herself concerned with maritime affairs, now that Holland and Spain, whose interests were the same as the French, could no longer get a hearing for themselves. But Russia, through her situation at the world's end, protected as much by her wastelands as by her frosts, and still, momentarily, more continental than maritime through her power and influence—Russia, I say, was under the spell of England; and

[1] Napoleon remarked in particular: "Not a Frenchman but would rather die than submit to terms that would make us slaves of England and wipe France from the list of great nations."

her foresight was not great enough to show her all the inconveniences of the vast field which she offered everywhere to the ambition of this ally, who was certain none the less to become her unceasing rival, once the Emperor Napoleon had fallen.

The question of freedom of the seas or of commerce, which is likewise that of the freedom of nations, was sacrificed to the so-called freedom of the Continent. Moreover, although the Emperor, in this instance, was actually defending the common rights, this was imputed to him as a crime by European policy, carried away as it was by the ascendancy of England—and also, one must add, by fear and the necessity for peace. None cared about the future. For the time being, there was but one aim: to subdue France—to chain up Napoleon's power and reach a state of rest. It mattered little what cost or danger this would result in, later on.

Austria, who pretended to have had great trouble in bringing her allies to an armistice, and who even bragged that she had compromised herself by her feigned *démarches* on our behalf, complained that this correspondence had injured her still more. She treated as hostile declamations against her allies the complaints that a man had naturally confided to his father-in-law. She even objected to the very politic suggestions included in this letter. It must still be agreed, however, that she made use of every means to persuade the Emperor to conclude an armistice, which she regarded, quite properly, as the sole way of coming to any real treaty without putting the question of peace and of rival claims under the influence of each day's events on the battlefield. When these negotiations had been broken off, M. de Metternich wished to see in this letter only the determination not to treat;[1] and he deduced from it that the Emperor Napoleon's reverses had

[1] In his autobiography, Metternich says of that letter: "The day after this engagement [Montereau] he [Napoleon] wrote to the Emperor of Austria in the style that he might have employed of old, following one of his great victories. Notably, he was so foolish as to enumerate in this letter the losses suffered by the Allies at Montereau; and therein he outdid the bombast and boastfulness of his fabulous bulletins in days past." Metternich, *Memoirs*, I, 189.

not changed his plans a particle. It is said that upon reading this letter the Emperor of Austria exclaimed: "The Emperor Napoleon has not given up one of his dreams." Besides, when he had already been very displeased with the contents of this correspondence, he became wholly exasperated with his son-in-law because of the break-up of the conference at Lusigny. Count Flahaut, the Emperor's chief aide-de-camp, had spent several days there with the Allied commissioners.[1] From then on, Austria had resolved to let all be swept before the passions of the Coalition if a peace, for which she no longer hoped, were not signed at Châtillon during the allotted interim.

The Austrians tried by every possible insinuation to trap the French commissioner into being more concerned with temporary lines of military demarcation than with the great goal which it was our hope to reach. The Emperor, whose aide-de-camp had rendered a faithful account of all the insinuations met with—innuendoes for which His Majesty had been prepared, too, by the very positive overtures and explanations he had had direct from the Austrian officers who had been sent to propose this negotiation to him—was willing to see in this persistence only the embarrassment of his enemies, the result of his last successes.

Flattering himself, therefore, with the removal of the negotiating from the slow forms of the Congress of Châtillon, which dictated such hard terms to him and got nowhere, the Emperor persisted in regarding the pressure which he exercised upon the outlining of the armistice as a first step towards peace; a peace for which he flattered himself that he was stipulating the preliminaries at Lusigny.[2] He did everything

[1] On February 24, in answer to a renewed proposal for an armistice (as transmitted on the 23rd, in a message brought from Schwarzenberg by Prince Wenceslas of Liechtenstein), Napoleon had sent Flahaut to Lusigny, under orders that are published in the *Correspondance de Napoléon*, 21359. Flahaut was instructed to treat the suspension of hostilities as secondary to definitive acceptance of the basic terms of Frankfort.

[2] On the 27th, Flahaut was authorized to give up the scheme of having the preamble of the armistice contain the Frankfort terms, as such. He was to do so on condition that in the Netherlands

Continued on next page

to achieve it, but the commissioners persisted in treating the armistice only from its military aspect, upon which no agreement could be reached.

When the Emperor was unable to include Antwerp, a place to which he attached the greatest importance, within his armistice line, he thought this momentary rest of no further value. According to him, it gave the enemy the means of concentrating, of rallying all their scattered forces, while he was able neither to obtain this result on account of the armistice, nor to transfer the negotiating to Lusigny as he wished to do. He thought to gain everything, as he had so often done with success, by displacing the negotiations and the negotiators and handling his affairs more directly. He lost everything. For us, all was changed: we had nothing left but courage. Power and force were in the enemy's camp, with numbers and fortune. They had forgotten there that Napoleon, under like circumstances, had often been generous. Not only did they no longer take into account the European proposals made at Frankfort; they wished besides to dethrone, if they could not chain up, the man whom all the forces of Europe had never yet been able to defeat. The French commissioner, restrained by the most express orders, could not make a single concession; and all was broken off [March 5, 1814]. The Emperor was unyielding, and broke off these conferences as though they involved a mere military discussion which one could adjourn to-day and resume on the morrow—as though the battlefield were a hundred leagues from Paris. It must be admitted that all that had happened since the Frankfort proposals had not been designed to inspire him with confidence in these new overtures.

Austria, who long had boasted to me that she had made herself suspect among her allies by her feigned leaning towards us, and by the sloth and indecisiveness of her operations

the invaders should withdraw to beyond Antwerp, and that they should halt on the farther side of Chambéry in Savoy. Napoleon thought that the accepting of those terms would establish a presumption in favour of France's natural frontiers, when the time came for further agreements. Cf. August Fournier, *Der Congress von Châtillon*, 177.

as well, profited by the chance to turn her back on us openly. With things as they then stood, this change was not perceptible at the Congress. Could it be noticed at the Council of Sovereigns? I do not know Judging by many proofs of that event, we should have been justified in doubting Austria's concern. I do know, however, that we learned to our cost not to believe in the vigour and above all not in the timeliness of Austria's good intentions towards us; for in making this proposal, she seized the moment when the enemy's main body, and also his reserve corps, were in retreat, and when the Emperor Napoleon really could believe that his last successes had upset the plans of his numerous adversaries.[1] At that time, by not letting Austria see too openly that one had the right to question her plain dealing, one would have shown her all the discretion she deserved, in view of her plenipotentiary's behaviour and of her Cabinet's indecision. For if she had the slightest wish for peace at any price, that was to her own interest—and upon conditions so remote, too, from the truly European concern which she had deemed politic and profitable at Frankfort, that, at the very least, we could excuse ourselves for disbelieving in her boast of friendship on the score of parenthood and past alliance.

M. de Metternich had, in truth, always spoken in positive terms about the position we found ourselves in, and about the aims which we could attribute to the Allies and count upon their fostering. On the other hand, however, after the invasion of our territory he gave rein to the pretensions and projects for an overthrow on the part of his allies, as if the Viennese Cabinet's position had assigned him but a secondary rôle; as if, like Prussia, Austria had but followed along in the train of the Coalition, under the influence of a power stronger than her own. Perhaps he did this merely by way of threatening us; of intimidating the Emperor and persuading him to make an end, regardless of the price. But if such were long his object, it was needful to justify it by being strong and outspoken when peril drew near; when the stern

[1] Champaubert, February 10; Montmirail, February 11; Vauchamps, February 14; Montereau, February 18.

peace which they dictated to us grew possible. It was needful then to know how to overawe the passions and pretensions that one had assumed from one's allies—just as one made a daily pretence of complaining about the exorbitance of a son-in-law whom one had courted and adopted in his glory, and whom one was sacrificing in the day of his misfortune. In short, after the bases laid down at Frankfort, with what could Austria reproach him? With unwillingness to subscribe to what he called his own shame, and to surrender more than it had been thought expedient, for the well-being of Europe, to demand of him two months earlier? That was the whole question. No doubt the Emperor might have avoided speaking in his letter about Tartars of the desert, flags of truce, England's animus, the Emperor Alexander's vengeful spirit, and so forth[1]—shocking expressions, because none could have thought it possible to keep those letters private. But the Allies, who were following up the successes of the moment, were breaking the agreements made two months earlier, before the world, at Frankfort. Austria, who since then had been hankering to get Italy for herself, whereas earlier she had only felt bound to demand its independence, need not have let her fine ear be too badly shocked by those truths, when the Emperor Napoleon, to whose person none gave more consideration than they did to his country, could have branded the conduct of the Allies as *mauvais foi*. By not using that expression in his letter, one may say that he had preserved such a tone that his arguments, so well-founded otherwise and so designed to be appreciated by Austria, could have seemed but the most legitimate complaints. He was too bold: he spoke his mind as if he really had the troops which

[1] In his letter of February 21, Napoleon had said to Francis: "With a single word . . . Your Majesty can end the ills of a nation that is in the clutches not of common misfortunes, but that is subject, rather, to the crimes of Tartars of the desert, who scarcely merit the name of men. I assume that you need not ask why I am addressing myself to Your Majesty. I can approach neither the British, whose policy centres upon the destruction of my navy, nor the Tsar Alexander, because his every sentiment springs from passion and vengefulness. . . ."

he claimed to command—as if the men he had addressed were dispassionate, and were guided rather by a wise policy than by their ambition and their blind hatred of him. There was his mistake. By showing himself indomitable, he moved Austria likewise to plot his ruin. Yet that language—blameworthy, perhaps, in view of our situation—had a dignity and frankness which the very excess of his misfortune ought to have made felt; as also this phrase: "Had I been cowardly enough to accept the terms of the British and Russian ministers, Your Majesty ought to have turned away from me";[1] and other phrases, too, of a filial and hopeful kind, which abound in this letter, and which ought to have kept the Emperor of Austria from forgetting that he was his father-in-law, when, as master of Paris, he could have softened down the terms dictated by European politics. Actually, the Austrian Cabinet never once used its influence and the preponderance which its position gave it, to put a timely restraint upon the exaggeration of the belligerents. Witness the break-up of the Châtillon conferences on February 9, and their suspension for ten days, thanks to Russia alone.

As for the breaking-off of the Lusigny conferences, which determined Austria's mood—or rather, gave the opportunity which she seized upon—our position was then so critical, and in consequence the Emperor's refusal to agree to the demarcation they had wished to impose on him was so remarkable, that it is small wonder the Emperor Francis believed him unresigned to any sacrifice; but was this a sufficient motive for abandoning him to so cruel a fate? There is a point on which even politics will scarcely justify the Empress's father! From then on, his Cabinet never failed to concur in the opinion of his allies, who had cared little about treating, once they were in France and their affairs at Bordeaux and in the Midi had assumed a complexion in keeping with the temper of Russia,

[1] The full sentence runs: "Had I been cowardly enough to accept the terms of the British and Russian ministers, you ought to have turned away from me; for Your Majesty knows that nothing which humiliates and degrades thirty millions of men can long endure."

Prussia, and England.[1] The Austrian Cabinet will assert, perhaps, that it had nothing with which to oppose what the plenipotentiaries were daily sending word of, and what the advocates of dethronement were saying: that the Emperor Napoleon would never agree to the terms they had deemed it indispensable to lay on him—that the concessions I had made were only a means of gaining time, so as to be in a position to profit by chances for a fresh success. But I repeat that that is no justification, if one thinks back, for the discrepancy there was between the terms at Châtillon and those at Frankfort.

In the Emperor Napoleon's letter, and in the Prince of Neuchâtel's, Austria wished to see a scheme for splitting the Allies and for trying, by partial negotiations, to escape the solution of the main problem before the Congress. She could not, so it is said, have excused herself from the showing of this correspondence; but all that she inferred, all the intentions that she attributed to the Emperor Napoleon, were in no sense criminal—even if they had been real. That was a legitimate counter-move on his part. For his enemies, though they might boast of having been honest in their threats and warnings, had by no means been so in the terms they had imposed. The Emperor doubtless blinded himself to his perils as well as to his resources. He gauged the energy of others by his own: he treated counsels of prudence as weakness. But one must admit that his daring, resistance, and constancy under this imminent danger demanded the admiration and deserved the regard of his enemies, had they been generous—let alone of his father-in-law, his late ally, gone over now, though without provocation, to the enemy camp.

The mistrust prevailing amongst the Allies had long since reached Châtillon, where it was carried to such a point that

[1] Soult was about to lose the battle of Orthez on February 27. Bordeaux was restive, pending the arrival of the British there on March 12, when they came a little ahead of the Duke of Angoulême who had been invited thither by Lynch, the mayor. The Duke was then at Saint-Jean-de-Luz, whence he had issued a proclamation, dated February 11, which made a strong impression in the Midi. Cf. Vidal de la Blache, *L'Evacuation de l'Espagne*, Paris (Berger-Levrault), 1914, II, 351.

the underlings of the Allied plenipotentiaries were not on speaking terms. The Austrians shunned us like the plague. Only too enlightened, for some time past, about the serious consequences of a break-up and of the desire in many cabinets for that end, I never stopped urging the Emperor to come to a decision and authorize me to conclude, even at the cost of the greatest sacrifices. But the Emperor, unable to convince himself that his ruin might be to Austria's interest, and being therefore of the opinion that she would spare him more, the more his danger grew—since in no case could the proffered terms be worsened—did not submit to sacrificing for his personal safety the departments which the arms of the Republic had won. He resisted his bad luck still more, as he saw no glory to be had by overcoming it. As I have said already, he gauged everyone's zeal by his own and by that of the good people of Burgundy.[1] He saw the enemy as lost at the first setback; and he would not believe, moreover, that greater misfortunes would gain him still harder terms. Hoping for a piece of luck, he wished to make time for it to happen, and, instead of answering my despatches, he sent me nothing but bulletins of victories, so called—as if the peace-terms which Europe was imposing on us depended upon me; as if I needed to be fooled in order to be devoted and faithful; as if, in short, amidst the hordes that covered France and threatened the capital, the winning of a fight against a single corps could change the basis of affairs. These words, these reflexions, are those which I ceaselessly addressed to him.

Although my hands were tied—for the fatal hour had struck without the Emperor's having answered me or been able to satisfy the claims of his enemies—I had exceeded my authority. Yet, since I could not offer all that was demanded when we adjourned on February 9,[2] my position was only the harder because I did not hide from myself a single consequence of that break. I could not delude myself about the aim which the

[1] Concerning the struggle put up by the invaded departments, see H. Houssaye, 1814, 55.

[2] The conferences had been suspended at the Tsar of Russia's demand, following the session on February 9.

Allies had in view. I had long since spoken my mind to the Emperor clearly enough for him to be no more uncertain than I was about the designs of the coalition, and about its unreasonableness. If a few fleeting successes had blinded him to the true perils of his position, then it was by his own wish; for he had not wanted sufficient warning. Dangers crowded upon him, encompassed him, oppressed him from every side; but he thought to escape from them, and even to hide them from others, by misrepresenting them to himself. Though his genius might allow him to triumph at one point, it could not prevent his lieutenants from being involved at others, inasmuch as resources were everywhere inadequate. Everyone said so, at Headquarters as in Paris Discouragement, the word ran, was universal, not an account of the daily risks one took, but because the future promised no end to them. However, all held their tongues except the Prince of Neuchâtel, whose contacts with the army proved to him the exhaustion of resources and put him in a position to bring this state of affairs to the Emperor's notice, with a view to deciding him in favour of peace. Berthier performed this duty with vigour and courage—though everyone knew as well as he did that peace was indispensable, and that that opinion was rife, to say the least.

As I learned later, the Emperor, who had not overlooked this general state of mind, shunned those private conversations which, under different circumstances, it was his almost daily pleasure to invite, as much by way of sounding public opinion as of shaping it. In any case, what could one have told him that he must not have known better than we did? If his resolve could not be shaken by the perils which he had decided to face out rather than subscribe to what he called shameful terms—if, as seems likely from the course he followed, his mind had been made up long before—no other course was open to him except to fence for time, in the hope that military developments would show him a way to safety. This, no doubt, was asking Fortune for a miracle; but his genius and boldness had won so much from her that he was less able than others to despair of her smile. This stand once taken, it

followed that his discourse and instructions should be guided by circumstances alone.

It was natural then that he should have thought he needed to show no more respect or concern for the plenipotentiary than for the soldier who paid with life itself for the battles of his desperation. Therefore the Emperor, provoked at my urgence and the harsh truths with which my despatches harassed him, showed me no consideration. Placed as I was between his enemies and him, it was natural that I, the victim of circumstance, should catch the rebound of the offence which their unreasonableness gave to his glory and his pride. Compelled for the first time to obey the law which he had always laid down to others, he naturally avenged himself. I was well situated to receive all the blows. Therefore he relieved himself by complaining of me; by repeating to M. de Rumigny,[1] and charging him to tell me, that I had disgraced him at Châtillon. This was because, finding in the despatches that gave me *carte blanche* the extent of the risks he ran, I had written to M. de Metternich on February 9,[2] at the moment when Russia suspended the negotiations.

Four days afterwards, however, my *démarches* and behaviour alike were approved by a despatch of the eighteenth, which stated: "His Majesty praises your efforts; they do you credit. He wishes me to add to this letter the expression of his satisfaction with the way you have conducted yourself up to the fourteenth, et cetera." Thus circumstances alone made me seem to him now innocent, now guilty. Sometimes I even earned commendation: "He is a hard man, is Caulaincourt.

[1] In 1814, Rumigny was attaché at the Foreign Office and private secretary to the Emperor.

[2] A copy of this letter has been preserved, together with Caulaincourt's despatches to Napoleon on February 5 and 8, in the *Archives des Affaires étrangères, Mémoires*, France, 668. It was published, too, by Fain, *Manuscrit de* 1814, 265.—Caulaincourt, attempting to enlist Metternich as mediator, told him that he was ready to accept the "former frontiers," and to surrender as guaranty a portion of the strongholds which France would lose through that sacrifice of territory. This he would do if he could have an immediate armistice in exchange.

He is for ever whip in hand, the Master of the Horse—I am the postilion;" so he remarked further to M. de Rumigny. At another time he added: "I do not read his letters any more; they bore me;" and this was all too true. "If it is necessary to take a beating," he remarked later to those around him, "it is not for me to lend myself to it; that is the least violence one can do me." But none did him any; none so much as answered my letters. M. de Bassano even imputed it to me for a crime that I tried to persuade him to urge the Emperor to a decision. The Emperor, to whom he had shown my letters of the fourteenth and seventeenth,[1] took his part. My devotion and plain speaking were converted almost into treason. One was already inventing grievances, so as to judge and condemn me later on.

I revert to Headquarters because, in order to understand the foregoing details, it is needful to know what went on there. Next to the Prince of Neuchâtel, M. de Bassano was the most noted among the personages attending the Emperor —and he was, moreover, the man whom the Emperor long had honoured with his most intimate confidence. The duties of this Minister, as well as the Emperor's trust in putting everything into his hands, placed him in a position to know better than anyone else the state of France and of the army, and consequently to understand the perils that beset us.[2]

Yet, whether because he believed them not too pressing, or because he was overcome by the ascendancy of that will, that genius, which we were accustomed to see triumph over every obstacle, he deluded himself about the consequences that might follow from the obstructions which the Emperor put in the way of speaking out in his presence. Alas! the

[1] On February 14, Caulaincourt wrote to Maret: "You are near the Emperor: you enjoy his confidence; what happens in the field goes on beneath your eye; and you see from my correspondence how things stand with us here. I overstate nothing. . . . I beg you, then, to represent His Majesty's predicament to him with all the vigour needful at this moment."—*Archives de Caulaincourt*, file 12.

[2] Maret had surrendered the Portfolio of Foreign Affairs to Caulaincourt in November, 1813. As Secretary of State, however, he accompanied Napoleon throughout the Campaign of 1814.

sacrifices that were demanded of the Emperor's glory were so many and so hard—his reasons for refusing them were so praiseworthy, and his misery was so real—that a friend could find a wealth of feeling to make him pause, even though reasons of State compelled the Statesman to those sacrifices. M. de Bassano hoped to gain from time, which leads to reflexion, and likewise from the force and sway of circumstances, that measure of compliance which he thought it less urgent than I did to wrest from the Emperor at the moment. Like him, he could not be convinced that our fate might be sealed in a bare twenty-four hours. At the decisive moment he saw merely the setback that the Emperor was experiencing. He tried only to dilute the bitterness of the sacrifices that were required, and that seemed to cost the Emperor more than life itself. The humouring of the latter encouraged his hesitation: we adjourned, and all was lost.

Without backing, M. de Rumigny's courageous persistence went for naught. On two occasions he pointed out to the Emperor that, since what he dictated did not reply to the ultimatum delivered, it saved nothing. The Emperor, who knew that he was right, limited himself to a harsh display of impatience, without silencing him. The Minister, grieved at the annoyance that these remarks gave His Majesty, silenced the faithful secretary; and the despatch that should have determined the fate of the Emperor and of France was as little apropos as those before it, and compromised all that it could have saved. M. de Rumigny, whose courage was rewarded several days after by the loss of his post in the cabinet,[1] was sent out while they finished the despatch—which he was nevertheless commissioned to bring to me. More sorrowful than hurt at having been so poorly seconded in so important an occasion, he vainly protested about it to M. de Bassano, upon the latter's leaving the study. Thinking to console him, that Minister praised his zeal, and excused himself by telling him that the Emperor was already too wretched—that it was necessary to humour him.

Thus, while striving for the same goal as ourselves, and with

[1] Rumigny was relieved of his secretarial duties on March 20.

equally commendable intentions, the Duke of Bassano helped to prevent us from reaching that goal in time—that is, if the unwavering dislike which the Emperor had already shown about subscribing to the cutting-up of France was not insurmountable. Nobody was brave enough to write me that safety lay through peace alone, no matter of what sort. The unhappiest and often the bitterest reflexions were made loudly enough; the risks one ran were not concealed in the least; but those words never went in through the door of the Emperor's study. Granted, one could have felt excused from enlightening him about his position. Everyone knew that he received the most disheartening daily reports from his Ministers, many of whom, not content with writing to him, had charged M. de Saint-Aignan, who had had to go to Paris on a mission, to make known to him how things stood.

M. de Saint-Aignan (I learned these details later) reached Headquarters at Châtres on February 23, while Prince Wenceslas of Liechtenstein, whom Prince Schwarzenberg had sent to propose the armistice of Lusigny, was with the Emperor. The moment was more decisive than favourable, since the Emperor wished to view the enemy's least *démarches* as proofs of their embarrassment. Far from being checked by this reflexion, M. de Saint-Aignan saw in it only a further reason not to hide anything from him. Moreover, he frankly repeated to him all that none dared say except *in absentia*. The Emperor was angered, would not let him finish, and showed him the door with a strong epithet—which did not prevent him from shouting that a prompt peace was a good one, to which the Emperor replied that a shameful peace was always prompt enough.[1]

[1] Concerning the audience granted by Napoleon, immediately after his reception of Prince Liechtenstein, to Saint-Aignan, in the cartwright's cottage where the Emperor had spent the night, see Fain, *Manuscrit de* 1814, 146. Fain relates the end of that interview as follows: "'Sire,' exclaimed M. de Saint-Aignan in closing,—'Sire, peace will be fair enough if it is quick enough in coming.' 'It will come soon enough if it is shameful,' rejoined Napoleon. His brow darkened, and M. de Saint-Aignan was bluntly dismissed."

To return to Châtillon: I start by doing the men that were with me the justice of declaring that all of them, perceiving the danger and its inescapable consequences, urged me to make an end at any price. Among them I should mention M. de Rumigny as well, who had carried out, with a zeal and courage worthy of all praise, several prior errands from the Emperor to me. It was he who brought me word from General Belliard, who had charged him to tell me that the means of victory were wanting.[1] On the other hand the Emperor, though well posted about everything, not only treated me with the total reserve imposed by his orders—as if he dreaded his own weakness—but even kept me in the dark about the opinion of the Council of Regents. They, with the exception of Count Cessac, had advised subscribing to the required terms, when he consulted them. (I had only learned about the Lusigny conferences through the Allied plenipotentiaries; my Government never told me about them until the moment of their close.[2])

[1] Extract from a note by Rumigny (autograph, *Archives de Caulaincourt*, file 12): "Throughout the morning of [February 9] I had done nothing but listen to the plaints of the marshals and generals, who saw no further hope of safety unless in the Duke of Vicenza's success. The Duke of Treviso, the Duke of Danzig, and Generals Grouchy and Flahaut, amongst others, begged me expressly to give the Duke of Vicenza a clear understanding that it was needful for him to make peace at any price. What struck me most of all, though, was the fact that General Belliard came to me, at the very moment when I was taking horse, and said: 'You're off to Châtillon? Tell the Duke of Vicenza, I beg of you, that he is our last hope. Tell him that we have no army left. You have seen our men! Just so! Tell him that we have no more than eighty-nine thousand of them, all told. Perhaps the Emperor will try to exaggerate the numbers he has—but assure the Duke that what I am telling you is true. Nobody can know it better than I do. You may quote me, and say that I was the one who committed you to this errand.'"—At the beginning of February, Belliard had resumed his post as Chief Adjutant. Cf. Derrécagaix, *Le Lieutenant général comte Belliard*, Paris (Chapelot), 1909, 573.

[2] Perhaps Caulaincourt was late in receiving the Duke of Bassano's despatches. The latter informed him, however, in a letter dated from Châtres, February 23, concerning Prince Liechtenstein's errand; and he added that Berthier had suggested to

Continued on next page

In this position I struggled, all the more on guard against the urgency of my companions because, having long been of their opinion, I had to go against my own convictions as well. The more it was pointed out to me that my *démarches*, my opposition, would make me the first victim of the Restoration which everyone already expected, and the encroachments of which I was fighting with every means at my command—the more, I say, I felt it my duty not to exceed the bounds of the Emperor's express orders, and to agree to nothing, without his authorization. During the nine days when the meetings were adjourned, and when it was already a question of subscribing to the partition of a fourth part of France, I had been burdened with the crushing responsibility of the indefinite words "*carte blanche*."[1] Now that the dangers were even more pressing, I found myself without guide or precedent. Since February 17 I had not only been deprived of all power, but the Emperor had forbidden me to go beyond the Frankfort bases, and had refused to give up Antwerp. He told me: "I alone know where I stand."[2]

How was I to believe that the man who had given me *carte blanche* two weeks before, and who now showed so strong a disposition to the contrary, could be reduced to such extremities as I perceived? Astonished by this tone, I credited him with having resources about which his associates doubtless knew no more than I did. I expected to see his troops in the Midi ready to join up with him, and those at his hand

Prince Schwarzenberg "the appointing of a spot between Troyes and Vendeuvre" for the parleys. Two days later, moreover, Maret furnished details of the first conference.

[1] This expression occurred in Maret's letter to Caulaincourt on February 5: "The Emperor bids me give you to understand, in so many words, that His Majesty gives you *carte blanche* to bring the negotiations to a favourable end; to save the capital; to avoid a battle with the country's last hopes at stake." Cf. Ernouf, *Maret duc de Bassano*, 620.

[2] Napoleon to Caulaincourt, Nangis, February 17, 1814: *Correspondance de Napoléon*, 21285. The Emperor stated: "It is my intention that you sign nothing without my order, because I alone know where I stand."

engaged in some famous exploit that would restore our luck for a few days and give him time for a decision. Above all, I was hopeful; and the basis of my real hope, I admit, was this: that, profiting by the parleys at Lusigny, he would write his father-in-law another letter—one carrying an ultimatum more in keeping with his real status, and consequently such that Austria could afford to receive it with moderation. I thought that M. de Bassano, or some other who had the Emperor's full confidence and found himself entrusted with that mission, would sign within the day the basic understandings which would lay the storm. This device, which appeared to me more expedient and most in keeping with the critical position in which we stood, commended itself to me all the more because it had long seemed to me that peace amidst a crowd of plenipotentiaries was impracticable and not to be had. I was afraid that by taking it upon myself to make concessions, I might betray how hard-pressed we were; that I might thwart the stroke which the Emperor had reserved to make on his own account, whilst leaving me with my hands tied at the critical moment when our whole lot was to be decided.

Everything bore me out in this belief: what had happened at Lusigny, the secrecy preserved towards me until the very end of those negotiations, the trait in the Emperor which disposed him to such unforeseen decisions and dealings—all, down to the ill-temper towards me which I knew that my outspoken correspondence would arouse in him. Certain of the plenipotentiaries were so actuated by private malice and personal spite that it could only have been helpful to the cause of peace as a whole if it had been taken elsewhere; this I repeat. I was more anxious, then, to know that peace had been made than to have the unhappy privilege of signing it. Without otherwise deceiving myself about any of the difficulties that stood in its way, I devoted myself chiefly to enlightening the Emperor about his position, about the exigency and scheming of his foes, and in consequence about his own peril as much as about the need for his giving full powers to the man whom he trusted to take charge of the negotiations. Compelled to

listen to and put up with everything, yet hardly able to talk back to the plenipotentiaries, who took every occasion for offence because they were anxious only to break off—here was what one might call a state of violence, leading to no good. It looked to me as though peace would be more feasible in a few hours at the headquarters of the Sovereigns, and with all the ministers, than in a month at the Congress. All these considerations held me back—not to mention the shame of subscribing to the plundering of France, on my own responsibility and against the Emperor's explicit orders. The more my high office in the State demanded my concern for any peace whatsoever, if it preserved things as they stood, the more I recalled the Emperor's words when I left him—words which he repeated to me in his letter of January 4,[1] and of which moreover he made M. de la Besnardière[2] the interpreter, in his despatch of January 19.[3] As I say, the more peace at any price was to my personal interest and in accord with my judgement, the more I felt myself bound to deny my forebodings, let alone my desires, and hold myself to the strict carrying-out of my instructions. My rule was to do the right thing, let come what would.

After reading the orders that determined my conduct, anyone who will may condemn my behaviour. In the frank revelation of my course, however, and in the disclosure of my thoughts and impressions at the time, one cannot fail to see that I am turning myself over bodily to public disapproval; that I honestly do not wish to escape any blame, should I deserve it. In high matters of this kind, history demands to know the truth. And that is what I am telling

[1] Napoleon to Caulaincourt, Paris, January 4, 1814: *Correspondance de Napoléon*, 21062: and *Instructions pour le duc de Vicence*, of the same date, 21063.

[2] La Besnardière, director of the main political bureau at the Foreign Office since 1807, held the departmental portfolio during Caulaincourt's absence and up until February 3, when he rejoined his chief at Châtillon. Thus he had been working every night with the Emperor. Cf. Talleyrand, *Mémoires*, II, 136.

[3] This despatch was published by Fain, *Manuscrit de* 1814, 75.

—though less on my own behalf than for the guidance of those who may some day find themselves placed in a like position. My every thought and sentiment, during those days, can be found in this present writing and in my letters to the Emperor and to M. de Bassano. Since I foresaw what has happened, and am not of their number who either overlooked the cause or flattered themselves that they would not be sufferers, I cannot take advantage of the force or shifting of circumstances. . . . My hope was in the Emperor; I could not believe him as blind in his ill-fortune as he had often been presumptuous in his good. My reasoning conjured up resources for him that he did not have. In the name of the Emperor's safety, and the country's, I had called upon the Prince of Neuchâtel and the Duke of Bassano to write and tell me what the circumstances demanded done. When they remained silent, I could not believe that the mischief was so great as the peril which seemed to be imminent. I said to myself: "If I sign a shameful peace—and that, too, not only without authority from the Emperor but against his express command to do nothing without his authorization—my zeal will be accounted an act of cowardice, or perhaps even of treason. On the other hand, everything can be jeopardized if I do not sign. Yet the Emperor knows my predicament, and how exigent are his foes; he has had time to make up his mind. This is no new situation. The necessity for answering the plenipotentiaries is no sudden matter, imposed since yesterday."

Such was my position. There never was one more harrowing. Compelled to choose between the inconvenience of passing for a traitor, or for a coward at best, and the risk of such an overthow and such ruin as I foresaw, my choice would not have been uncertain, could I have saved France. But was she to be saved by imposing on the Emperor the terms of Châtillon, which he would not have ratified? I should have brought total ruin upon him; for since February 9 he had had time to reflect upon my having informed M. de Metternich that I was inclined to subscribe as demanded—and he had not merely withdrawn the *carte blanche* that was mine before, but

had even forbidden me to reply without his order. I could then do nothing for the nation and the Emperor without exceeding my orders, and consequently without being faithless to my trust. I could not even take refuge beneath the protest that, since the unreasonableness of the Allies had been unforeseen, my zeal and devotion had bowed to the law of necessity. Therefore I pursued the course which offered risks that I could share, and which, though I too would suffer by it if my misgivings came true, yet gave me the privilege of being resigned rather than the benefits of being cowardly. Surely my title to the drawing of that distinction has been somewhat clearer than another's; for I saw the Emperor driven and blinded, by what fatality I know not, to speed his own destruction and to achieve ours.

Nevertheless, I could not believe that the Emperor, surrounded by so many loyal men, could have been sufficiently self-deluded to argue about the lines of an armistice six days ago, if to-day the enemy could actually threaten Paris. By giving in, I should have humbled France and the Emperor—and all for nothing, in view of my conviction that he never would ratify the pledges to which my devotion might lead me to subscribe.

M. de Stadion, plenipotentiary of the sole power that we could believe disposed to favour us, had been personally ill-treated by the Emperor; and he never had forgotten it.[1] One lone Austrian really had a grudge against him—and that man was made the chosen representative of the Emperor Napoleon's father-in-law. He was, after a fashion, chief of the negotiators there, since the position of the Court that he represented made it the deciding factor in the Coalition. This selection on Austria's part was more than enough to show the fair-minded what were her secret leanings. When, at an assembly of that kind, her policy and influence had been

[1] Count Philip Stadion (1763–1824) had been appointed Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs in 1806. After being prime mover of the third coalition, he had promoted the War of 1809. At the start of the peace-negotiations, Napoleon had insisted upon Stadion's removal from the Ministry, where he was then replaced by Metternich.

placed in such hands as those, what chance was there of enjoying the impartiality, the conciliatory temper, which by self-interest and honour alike she was bound to show? Can a man be impartial whose heart is full of passion and hatred? Where there is bias, duty cannot outweigh sense. If, as M. de Metternich informed me time and again, his policy and the Austrian Emperor's good intentions were in our favour, could they overcome that adverse influence? Without even perceiving that he did so, M. de Stadion added fuel to the fire when it needed smothering from every quarter.

My position, as can be seen, was very perplexing in respect of the enemy. It was no less ticklish in respect of my own Government.

The Government was far from helpful—far from making things easier for me. Its language, the army bulletins that were sent me instead of information, its suppressions, its mystifications—I may say the political chicanery it used with me—all showed me that I was its intended fool, if not its victim, and that I was not to have the honour of preserving it. Nevertheless, I pushed aside every personal concern, and busied myself with nothing but the danger to the country and to the Emperor. I was determined to use every means of bringing him to sign the peace, which was the sole means of assuring our common safety. I struggled against what I saw was his reluctance to agree to the hard terms which the Allies were imposing on us, through the use and, in their turn, the misuse of strength. No matter how plainly this laying-down of the law might answer the need of all Europe, I felt the harm it would do to our dearest interests, and how much it would cost the Emperor, too. I knew, moreover, all the wiles of that superfine intelligence—all that it was capable of attempting, even under the purview of its plenipotentiary, and by means of logic-chopping and legalistic protests in support of its unwillingness—in order to escape the inevitable. Therefore I resolved that, in keeping with my custom, I would shun in my communications anything that might arouse, let alone augment, his acrimony against any individual and thus provide the excuse for backbiting and personal vituperation.

Since the Emperor could not conquer the force of circumstance, it was only natural that he should speak reproachfully of men and of his enemy's glaring poor faith. It was vital, then, not to feed his pain and irritation from day to day. Danger was too real and near at hand. France and the Emperor could be helped in but one way: down the road to an immediate peace. In addition, I had resolved from the start to keep to myself the low opinion I had about the selection of some of my colleagues—not to mention their behaviour. My complaints about M. de Stadion as plenipotentiary, or about M. de So-and-so, would only have annoyed the Emperor. When I did make my objections felt in the Austrian Cabinet, I knew very well that they would have slight enough influence in so ill-disposed a Court; but that was the one recourse left to me.

I therefore made use of the sole means that could possibly succeed, inasmuch as it would at least forewarn the Austrian Emperor and his Cabinet against his plenipotentiary's bias. Accordingly, with a suitable reserve and the restraint demanded by my position, I had conveyed my views—in some measure, my protests—to the Emperor of Austria, through M. de Metternich.[1] To him I revealed all the disadvantages of that situation; and I had them repeated to him by M. de Floret, and by Prince Esterhazy, whom he despatched to me at Châtillon. Thus I advised him that no sound results could be hoped for, unless through direct communication amongst the ministers of the different powers. Moreover, Austria could not possibly have overlooked these grave considerations, had she honestly wished to save the Emperor Napoleon; and

[1] See Caulaincourt's letter to Metternich, February 8, 1814, as published by Fain, *Manuscrit de* 1814, 262: "Count Stadion doubtless is worthy of the friendship which unites you; he deserves the trust that you wish me to place in him; but M. de Stadion is not you; his influence over the negotiations can not be such as you yourself could have exercised." Metternich had answered on February 15, from Troyes: "Rest assured that, with things as they stand, I am more useful here than with you. I have already vouched to you for M. de Stadion: take my word for it." Cf. A. Sorel, VII, 295.

the outcome, it seems to me, has proven that if she had been acting in good faith when she proposed the peace of Frankfort, and even the peace of Châtillon, she yet held this wish continually subordinated to other aims which she dared not avow, because she was still unable to indulge the hope of seeing them brought to fulfilment. Her moderation was based not so much upon conscience and policy as upon her uneasy hope of success. In justice to M. de Metternich, however—and this is borne out by his letters, as well as by all the messages given me in his name—I must say that he gave us warning of everything that threatened us. Yet it is clear that even though his Court did not lend itself in principle to the schemes of other cabinets for a dethronement, it still did not show itself, at any time, so opposed to those ideas that it might feel compelled to reject them. Austria meant, no doubt, to act with moderation for a while: but this was the course required of her by circumstance; by the healthy respect she had for our national strength; by the vigour that the Emperor was showing, and the success that he had gained, more than once, even though outnumbered; by everything, in short, down to recollections of the wars of the Republic. Behold the secret of her moderation. As for her basic policy, it goes without saying that that is to be explained in her—as in many others who have acted contrary to what they should have done—by the prompting of self-interest. Her Government, like every other, was afraid of the Emperor. His ambition and his adventurous temper alarmed her more than it did the rest, because of her connexion with him; and fear, which provides statecraft with many an *arrière-pensée*, often leads one to do what one would not, and even to act contrary to one's interest.

I revert to the Congress. Since its break-up could bring about more direct discussions amongst the ministries, in that respect a rupture promised the chance of an earlier outcome; if, that is to say, Austria truly wished France to make a seemly peace. It was enough to be negotiating under the sway of the three or four hundred thousand bayonets that occupied our territory, and to have to struggle with the ambition of sovereigns and ministers. It counted for something, situated

as we were, to get away from the hostile influence of certain impassioned plenipotentiaries, who were more our enemies than were their governments. If it came to a renewal of negotiations, as could be hoped from a phrase in M. de Metternich's letter of March 18 and from the warranties of his agents, we should have gained rather than lost by the break-up of the Congress. "Perhaps," he had written, "we are nearer to peace in consequence of the rupture of such fruitless negotiating; peace alone will fulfil all our desires." I confess, though, that I was doubtful whether the proceedings would be resumed unless the Emperor achieved an outstanding success. Hence I was hopeful; for I could not believe that he would thus have staked his destiny and ours with no means at his hand to combat the enemy, and to hold off their triumph for a fortnight. As to the political aspect, I did not conceal from myself that the Allies, bent as they were upon subversion, would scarcely accede to further negotiating unless we could win ourselves a respite at the sword's point. I was uneasy, then, in that respect; but peace was so fine an objective, and the conclusion of it seemed to me so greatly to Austria's interest, that I could not deny myself the hope that this time she would invoke her preponderance in order to open one last avenue to a discussion that might have retrieved everything.

With the exception of the British, who were forthright, frankly on the side of their own interest, but straightforward men, the rest of the plenipotentiaries were passion, bitterness, and vengefulness personified. I should be unfair, however, to complain of them in my private capacity, since on the contrary I had much to thank them for. But, speaking as a plenipotentiary, no men have ever been more hostile, more discordant in business, than they were. The slightest objection led to a threat of adjournment. Every argument, every remark had to be checked, lest the session be broken off *sine die*; they disavowed every prior statement or proposal that had been made by them or their governments. They required that wilfulness, or rather the moment's whim, should be accepted as the ruling power—and with none of your protests, either, against the favour they were doing you. Ever present

in my mind were the Emperor's words to me upon our leaving Paris—words which he had also written me on January 4,[1] after my leaving him, and which he had had M. de la Besnardière repeat yet again on January 19.[2] When, moreover, the Allies at Frankfort had named as the natural boundaries of France those geographical frontiers which are really ours, they had themselves marked out the limit of such sacrifices as a wise policy could demand. They had thus pointed out what moderation could grant without disgrace, and had set up, in some degree, the Emperor's aversion to any other sacrifice. To give up our conquests beyond the Alps and the Rhine

[1] ". . . Does one wish to cut France down to her former frontiers? That means her disgrace. That state of affairs can suit none but the Bourbons. That provisio is inadmissible without them, as the British very well know. . . . If the nation backs me, the enemy is moving to his own destruction. If Fortune deserts me, my lot is cast. I cling not to the throne; I shall not shame the country, nor disgrace myself, by agreeing to shameful terms." (*Caulaincourt's note.*) See the Emperor's letter from which the above lines are cited, *Correspondance de Napoléon*, 21062. The sentence: "That state of affairs can suit none but the Bourbons," and the one about England, have been suppressed in the State publication. They occur, however, in the original document, which is preserved in the *Archives de Caulaincourt*, file 12.

[2] ". . . The will to put France back into her prior estate would mean her downfall and disgrace. Without the Rhinelands, Belgium, Ostend, and Antwerp, France would be nothing. The project for reducing France to her former frontiers is inseparable from the restoration of the Bourbons, because they alone could serve as guaranty of that project's maintenance; and England knew that very well. With any but the Bourbons, a peace so grounded would be impossible, nor could it be lasting. Neither the Emperor nor the Republic—if subversion were to revive it—would ever agree to any such stipulation. For His Majesty's part, his resolve was firm-set, nor did he budge: he would not leave France smaller than he had found her. Therefore, if the Allies chose to alter the accepted treaty-bases and propose the former frontiers, he saw but three courses open to him: to fight and win, to fight and die with glory, or else, if the country did not second him, to abdicate. He did not cling to pomp and circumstance; he never would pay shamefully to keep them." (*Caulaincourt's note.*) (La Besnardière to Caulaincourt, January 19, 1814, in Fain, *Manuscrit de* 1814, 75.)

would lay one open enough to the blame of certain contemporaries; to give up all of them would mean condemnation before the bar of history. Truly, it was no small matter to offer oneself up as the means to such a treaty, when authorized to do so; but to subscribe to it in violation of express orders was to condemn oneself to everlasting shame.

Since I knew enough about the state of affairs at Headquarters to keep me from being fooled, I could not deceive myself about a single difficulty of my position. I might resolve to carry out all my duties, despite the solitude and uncertainty in which I should be left. If possible, I might redouble my zeal in an effort to gain time. For that purpose I might decide to make, of my own motion, such sacrifices as were indispensable and as we never could have avoided making—though M. de Rumigny's entreaties had been such that I was resolved not to go further without orders. I knew that everyone would have been dissatisfied with the peace, once it was made. A week later, and all would have thought that the Allies had been so exigent only because I had been so cowardly. The charitable would have said that I had been weak: the rest would have called me traitor. They would have added: "Another would have used his position to better advantage." The army, itself so anxious for that very peace, would have put up the cry of treason. Yet at the same time I was convinced that subscription to those sacrifices was the sole means of preserving our independence and the Imperial Dynasty, which guaranteed the rights of us all. In this cruel predicament, I was feverish with desperation. There was death in my heart; and yet when I confronted the plenipotentiaries I was bound to keep my countenance. I confess that when I was with certain of them, I felt something which must have been akin to madness.

In all the schemes suggested to them by their feigned moderation and loving-kindness, the plenipotentiaries had forgotten the Pope. They sensed all the more keenly the censure that history will not fail to level at them for this oversight, since, in my counter-proposal, I was the first to mention the Holy Father. They then thought better of it, and went through

what one may call the wretched farce of inserting a note on the Pope's behalf into the last protocol. But for my reminder, they never would have given him a thought. This conduct of the Allies, and of Austria especially, towards a Christian Prince—and an Italian—is enough to show that those moderators of Europe thought of nothing but their own expediency and aggrandizement.

The wording of the protocol for the final session was disputed as usual.[1] That used up the whole of the twentieth. I answered M. de Metternich's letter of the eighteenth by calling to his attention the disadvantages of the style of negotiating that had been adopted, and by pointing out that, as he said and if it were his wish, perhaps we should be closer to peace through the rupture of the Congress than through the prolonging of those fruitless negotiations. I added that there could be no peace until such time as Lord Castlereagh and himself were the instruments of that beneficial work.[2]

I left Châtillon the next day, March 21, at six in the morning. Three leagues outside the town I met M. Beugnot, the auditor, who handed me the despatches of the ——.[3] They allowed me a bit more latitude, though still not enough

[1] On March 18 the Allied plenipotentiaries, after having rejected the Duke of Vicenza's counter-proposals, had read a memorandum declaring the conferences formally at an end. None the less there was one further meeting on the nineteenth. The protocols of the final two sessions were published by Fain, *Manuscrit de* 1814, 328 and 337.

[2] Caulaincourt to Metternich, Châtillon, March 20, 1814, published by Fain, *Manuscrit de* 1814, 347. The Duke of Vicenza had sent Rumigny to Metternich to stress this point.

[3] Caulaincourt's manuscript leaves this date blank. Actually, the letters he then received were from Napoleon at Reims, March 17 (*Correspondance de Napoléon*, 21505), and one from Bassano, of the same date. Beugnot's name appears clearly enough in this connexion; but Caulaincourt's memory must have tricked him here. To be exact, the Emperor's final orders were brought him by Etienne M. T. Frochot, son of the former Prefect of the Seine, and at that time auditor of the State Council. See Fain, *Manuscrit de* 1814, 213, and Ernouf, *Maret, duc de Bassano*, 633.

to make peace—even admitting, as seemed most unlikely, that the plenipotentiaries would any longer have wished it. The Emperor still did not perceive his situation, or rather was unwilling to do so. He was self-deceived about everything; about the Congress and his own strength alike. Unable to forget that he had kinged it over Europe, he could resign himself neither to the idea that now it was his turn to be overruled nor that the treaty which he was required to sign at a set day and hour had had a dire *sine qua non* placed at the foot of its every article.

Count Volkenstein, one of the Emperor of Austria's orderlies, had been assigned to escort me as far as Joigny. There I came across the forces of General Allix, who had been left to his own discretion, without orders or guidance. However, he had inspired the countryfolk there with his proper spirit and energy; and France would have been saved if all the generals had been actuated by an equal patriotism. I wrote to M. de Metternich by courtesy of Count Volkenstein, to thank the Emperor Francis for that officer's care; and I took advantage of that opportunity to remind the Minister of the pacific paragraph in one of his two letters of the eighteenth.[1] Since General Allix himself did not know where the army lay, I set out towards Nogent-sur-Seine and reached there at four in the morning [March 22]. I despatched a courier to Paris, to take some of the important documents to the Ministry, whatever the hazard. All the bridges were down. I had a barge found to ferry my carriage across, and went on my way at random, hopeful of meeting someone who might be able to direct me. A postal-inspector whom I met at evening advised me to take the way through Sézanne, where I arrived at midnight March [22–23]. Colonel Noizet, in command there, was no better informed of the army's movements. It was known indirectly that the Dukes of Treviso and Ragusa, who were being driven back by some considerable force, had lost their lines of communication with the Emperor. Large troops of Cossacks lay across all the lines; during the evening, near La Fère-Champenoise, they had captured two couriers,

[1] *Archives des Affaires étrangères, Mémoires*, France, 668.

one of whom was carrying a letter from the Empress to the Emperor, and other governmental despatches. Later on, at Paris, I was told that those letters had contributed more than a little to the decision of the Allies for their general movement upon the capital.[1]

The need of breathing the horses that had drawn me prevented my setting off again until two in the morning. I took the Sommepuis road, which was full of bread convoys. At six o'clock I found myself at the tail of the Duke of Taranto's artillery-train which, on account of the vile state of the roads and the difficult nature of the terrain, had become so scattered that it stretched out for nearly two miles. At ten o'clock the Russian cavalry fell upon the head of this convoy and captured twenty-two fieldpieces and caissons. The escort, poorly officered, widely scattered along the whole length of the procession, and made up of some two hundred and fifty National Guardsmen and a few gunners, could offer no resistance. We should all have been taken but for the unlooked-for arrival of a detachment of cavalry of the Guard, which the Duke of Taranto had despatched towards Saint-Dizier. Upon hearing our guns, they came to our rescue, and extricated the remainder of the convoy, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs along with it. I made use of this detachment to hasten my journey and join up with the Duke of Taranto, whom I

[1] On March 23 a letter from Berthier to Macdonald, dated from the Château du Plessis at 3 a.m., fell into the invaders' hands. The evening before, too, Tettenborn's Cossacks had seized a letter from Napoleon to Marie Louise, wherein the Emperor was sending word that he had crossed the Marne so as to draw the enemy wide of Paris. Finally, the evening of the 23rd Tchernychev's and Tettenborn's Cossacks caught a courier coming from Paris with letters from various officials, notably the Duke of Rovigo, which gave a gloomy picture of how matters stood in the capital. In consequence of the information thus gleaned, a council of war was held the 24th, in the morning, on the Sommepuis-Vitry road. Present were the Tsar, the King of Prussia, and the generals-in-chief of the Coalition. It was decided, at Alexander's instance, that on the morrow, March 25, the Allied main body and the Silesian forces should start to close in on Paris, leaving Wintzingerode to follow Napoleon towards Saint-Dizier.

found with his advance-guard. In the course of our skirmish with the Russians, I had mounted the horse of a gunner who had just been killed.

The Duke of Taranto believed that the main body of the Allies was following him; but such was not the general opinion. Some officers thought that he was merely being pressed by a small body serving as screen for the movement of the main army in support of the Silesians, who were moving upon Paris. (Later, when I joined up with the Emperor and gave him these divergent reports and sundry details bearing upon them, he agreed with the Duke of Taranto, from whom, he told me, he had had two reports. He was unwilling to believe in the possibility of an enemy movement upon Paris.) Since the enemy had occupied Vitry, the Duke of Taranto took up his position about five miles beyond. There I left him and went on to Ney's headquarters which lay at ——,[1] across the Marne, which could be crossed by two easy fords and a trestle bridge. Ney gave me an escort of Poles of the Guard. I took a corporal's mount and came up with the Emperor at Saint-Dizier, where I arrived at midnight [March 23-24]. He was eating supper with the Prince of Neuchâtel.

Although my letters should have sufficed to prepare him for the break-up of the Congress, he was astonished to find the fact of it confirmed by my arrival. Thanks to his accustomed self-possession, however, he concealed his surprise. People kept coming and going, in slight haste to have particulars of the event which was proclaimed all too clearly by my presence there. He did not ask me a single question about affairs, but carried on the conversation he was having about the army with the Prince of Neuchâtel and another general. After supper the conversation still went on. The Emperor had no doubt but that the enemy's main army was following him, and that his whole manoeuvre should have put their

[1] The manuscript leaves this name blank. Read: Frignicourt. Caulaincourt came up with Ney there on March 23, at about 5 p.m. Cf. Ney to Napoleon, Frignicourt, March 23, 5 o'clock p.m. *Archives nationales*, AF IV, 1607

artillery-trains into retreat; he was pleased to think himself on the eve of great military doings. Wrapped in his thoughts, which had doubtless been multiplied by my arrival, he said barely a word to me of the Congress and its rupture. He only chatted with me briefly about that. He spoke to me at much greater length of the army; of his scheme for rallying the troops which he had formed in his chief garrisons, and for bringing off a great coup at the expense of certain enemy corps which he regarded as vulnerable.

"With the Burgundians in their present mood," he told me, "since the looting by Russians and Prussians, a victory will drive the enemy out of France. They will be massacred there—and behold, the means of treating for peace. The peace they tried to force on you at Châtillon could have been nothing but a truce, for no one ever subscribes honestly to his own disgrace: nor would I have been willing to do so. Deception is beneath me. You could only have granted everything so that Razumowski[1] and Stadion might demand something else. They would have done to the Châtillon proposals what they have done to those of Frankfort. That has all been a put-up game arranged between Metternich and Castlereagh, to make the British Parliament grant subsidies. And what does the enemy wish? Simply to pillage and overthrow France. Alexander wishes to revenge himself at Paris for his stupidity in having burnt Moscow. His spite has made him forget that I could have overturned his country by setting his serfs free. But such means were beneath me: mine was a war of policy. I have waged it fairly: besides which, he is not yet in Paris. . . .

"To humble us—that is what our enemies wish; but death were better. I am too old a campaigner to hang on to life: I will never sign away France's honour: you did well, by not subscribing to the terms: I should have disavowed you at Paris. All the high officials are frightened, even the Ministers. Except Cessac, they were all of them in favour of accepting your proposals, but I have paid no heed to their decision: did

[1] Andrew, Prince Razumowski (1752–1836), the Russian plenipotentiary at Châtillon.

you know that? The peasants of Burgundy and the Champagne have more spirit than all the men on my Council: you all have the shivers. The word runs that the counter-revolution is complete, because the Mayor of Bordeaux has turned traitor. No one understands the French but me: indignation will follow on the heels of dejection. You will see what is going to happen before a week is out. The whole population will be under arms: we shall have to come to the enemy's rescue to stop the violence: they will slaughter everything that has a foreign look to it.[1]

"We will make a fight of it, Caulaincourt," he went on. "If the nation supports me, the enemy is nearer ruin than I am, for anger is running high. I cut the Allied communications; they have numbers, but no support; I rally some of my garrisons, wipe out one of their corps, and the slightest reverse can drive them far away. They know what their last retreat has already cost them: another move like that, and not one of them escapes. If I am beaten, it is better to fall gloriously than subscribe to terms such as the Directory would not have accepted after their Italian reverses. If I have support, I can regain everything. If Fortune deserts me, the country will not be able to reproach me with the breaking of my coronation oath. Schwarzenberg is following me; you come at the right time; you will see something pretty before long."

I then tried vainly to make ideas of reasonable conduct prevail—to persuade him to attempt, in respect of his father-in-law, that gesture which I had supposed already made. He would listen to nothing. He was anticipating safety in success alone. Despite what I told him of the talk of two peasants whom I had questioned by the wayside—accounts which left me altogether certain that Schwarzenberg's army was striking for Paris—he was convinced that the enemy was following his lead. Convinced, as I say, that that army was covering

[1] "On March 23, he (Napoleon) organized the wholesale insurrection of the Eastern Provinces; he received most encouraging news about it, both from the Ardennes and the Vosges." (Louis Madelin, *Le Consulat et l'Empire*, II, 291.)

him, and that, as he said, it did not dare to let him out of sight, he was obsessed with his schemes of strategy. They absorbed him to such a degree that for some days past he had read no further than the army reports. He either did not or would not know the content of my final letters. Was that by way of subterfuge for the predicament he was in, or had he discounted the Congress as broken off from the start? I cannot say. I do know, however, that on the morrow, when chatting with me more in detail, he seemed astonished—as if the break-up of the negotiations had not been foretold to him well in advance. He spoke to me after the fashion of a man who is surprised at what he has heard, but who is resigned to it, and resolute to sacrifice everything rather than agree to terms which he has always called shameful.

As for myself, the more predictable seemed the enemy's advance on Paris, and the more it looked to be a consequence of the stand taken at Châtillon, the less readily could I cling to the faint hope that there was time to negotiate further, did one wish to do so. To gain a hearing, one would have had to make a lump offer of all the sacrifices that were being demanded. How could the Emperor be persuaded to do that? How, when he was all the more determined to venture or even to lose everything, because he thought himself closer than ever to a great victory, through the disorder and uneasiness into which—according to him—the enemy forces would be thrown by his striking at their rear?[1] It was written in my stars that I was to meet nothing but difficulties that were somehow insurmountable. I had but just come away from plenipotentiaries who, for the support of a thesis diametrically opposed to the one I was defending, possessed all the assurance that force can give when success has heartened it and hatred spurred it on. And now, in order so much as to open a discussion with the foe, I was compelled before all else to wrestle like an enemy with the personal obstinacy and

[1] At this juncture the Emperor dreamed of carrying out the sweeping movement that was needful to put him in touch with the fortresses of Lorraine, whence, with his forces enlarged by the garrisons there, he expected to manœuvre upon the Allied rear.

blindness of my Sovereign! Upon hearing us argue and the Emperor hold out, anyone would have said that he was defending himself against the worthy de Stadion and Razumowski. Yet no matter how faint, alas, my hopes might be, I could not let myself be discouraged. Some less adverse circumstance might arise; the Emperor might be smitten by some good, conciliatory mood; that mighty spirit could perhaps bow a little to the strength of reversal and misfortune. Consequently, it was needful to set all in order for profiting by what might come, and for talking peace once more.

When pushed back, I returned to the charge: when refuted, I did not lose hope. I renewed my importunities, and tried every means of enlightening the Emperor as to his position. He sent for me during the night. After a rehash of all that we had said, it was agreed that an effort had to be made towards the resuming of negotiations. Nothing was decided, however, about the means to be used; nor would anything be promised in the way of concessions to be made. It was clear, then, that before all else he wished a decision through force of arms. For my part, my conviction was too strong that the success of one's proposals depended upon the sacrifices one would make; and so I had to hold out for positive offers. Therefore our discussions, which were resumed at frequent intervals, were often of the liveliest kind. When I brought pressure upon the Emperor, he answered me by saying that every *démarche*, every proposal, down even to our own conversations, amounted to so much waste of time.

"The Allies," he told me, "never have wished to negotiate. Once in a while they have wished to gain time, because their interest required it: to-day they no longer even wish what they proposed to you. From the minute when they demanded strongholds in France proper, and in addition to what the peace they were trying to dictate would have given them, it has been proven to me that what they wished was not peace but the means of stirring up strife within—revolutions—and of profiting by them to cut France to pieces. Flanders, and the holds we have there, are convenient to the House of

Orange. Alsace-Lorraine can fit in with the Austrian scheme of things. Prussia will line up along the Meuse. The British will destroy Cherbourg. They have made a fool of you, Caulaincourt—and they would like to do the same with the honour of Old France.

"The attacks that have been made upon me personally, and which Metternich pretends to be afraid of, are a mere pretext. For it is recognized that I alone can save and defend France's integrity, in view of the powerful position in which all the great nations will be placed by the partitioning of Poland and our loss of Italy. The wish to relieve France of Belgium is as good as a demand for her to turn over Alsace-Lorraine—as asking her for the Trois-Evêchés. I know Metternich and the Russians: give way to them to-day over a single point, and to-morrow, under some new pretext, you will have to grant them one thing after another. The Frankfort treaty was reasonable: there is no other that I can sign: that treaty alone can give everyone the status that assures a lasting peace."

My comments, and all the reflexions dictated by circumstances and necessity—reflexions that gained weight from the state of the troops and the discouragement caused by my return[1]—were lost upon the Emperor. He did not begin to grow more amenable until, after thirty-six hours had elapsed, he was hearing doubts expressed from all sides about the movements which he believed the enemy had made. The Emperor was thoughtful; he skipped abruptly from one topic to another, and tried to avoid going into the questions for which he had no satisfactory answer. He was like a man who tries to make himself insensible to what is happening because he is too deeply embarrassed by it, and because, in addition, it is painful for him to think about the possible consequences. Even so, the Emperor let me speak to him yet again about the value of a gesture, and about the sacrifices, too, which he

[1] Cf. Louis Madelin, *Le Consulat et l'Empire*, II, 290: "He (Caulaincourt) returned from Châtillon completely demoralized. He burst into lamentation and direful prophecies; and instantly the all-too-recent zeal of the marshals subsided."

should make; but as I could see readily enough, to hear them spoken of was all that he could stand for the time being. So heavy were those sacrifices, and so uncertain was Austria's goodwill and her vigour in putting the question of peace ahead of the subversive schemes of her allies, that, like him, I hesitated over the enormity of the price there was to pay, and over the terms of that payment. Like him, I felt it cowardly to humble oneself for nothing; and yet, under such grave circumstances, it struck me as a mistake, or rather as madness, not to run that risk for the chance of succeeding. This thought was decisive for me, but not for the Emperor.

Such was our situation—or my dilemma, I may say—when, in the morning, M. de Piré, who had been assigned to scout the countryside, brought into our Headquarters at Saint-Dizier de Wessenberg, who was an Austrian envoy, and Skjoldebrand, who was the Swedish envoy attached to the Emperor Alexander, and with them sundry Russian and Austrian officers. They had been arrested by the countryfolk of ——.[1] Later on, at Paris, we learned that the Duke of Dalberg's secret agent, M. de Vitrolles, who had been accredited to the enemy plenipotentiaries so as to sound out Allied opinion, was amongst the prisoners.[2] The Austrian

[1] The manuscript leaves this name blank. Read: Saint-Thiébaut. The date was March 24, and the prisoners reached Saint-Dizier just as Napoleon was about to remove his headquarters to Doulevant. Caulaincourt's narrative clarifies the record of this incident, which until now has been confused. That is to say, Fain (*Manuscrit de* 1814, 225) has the prisoners arrive at Saint-Dizier on March 28, and H. Houssaye (1814, 407) has copied his mistake. One might remark, however, that Caulaincourt's two letters to Metternich, which are involved here and which could not have been despatched until after Wessenberg's audience with Napoleon, are dated March 25.

[2] Baron Vitrolles, that is to say, was returning from his errand to the Allied rulers and the Count of Artois, and was trying to reach Paris again, wherefore he had taken a seat at Nancy in Wessenberg's cabriolet. After the group had been arrested, he destroyed his papers and gained his travelling-companion's consent to pass himself off as the latter's valet-secretary. When they

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Minister, in whose suite M. de Vitrolles was, passed him off as his valet, and, under guard with other prisoners, he went unnoticed. At the moment when those captives were brought in, the Emperor was on the point of taking horse. He ordered them to be led off to Doulevant, whither Headquarters was removing.[1] The occasion struck me as favourable. M. Wessenberg came from England, where he had been sent from Munich in 1813; it was natural to release him, under agreement with us to bring his Government to the point of negotiating for a general peace. Through this means, which chance had brought to his hand, the Emperor could secure the delivery of whatever proposals he might wish, and even add to them such explanations as he might think fit. On the march, and upon our early arrival at Doulevant, I invited the Emperor once more, and once more in vain, to write the Emperor of Austria in person a letter that should carry explicit assurance of his peaceful aims. I urged him without avail to have one of his aides-de-camp—or anyone he chose and would trust and empower—go with M. Wessenberg, so as to get an answer whether written or verbal, or some enlightenment upon the state of affairs. The release of this Minister seemed to me a circumstance favourable for the securing of admission to enemy Headquarters. The Emperor steadily refused agreement.

"Such procedure is useless,' he told me; "you would shame me for nothing. Metternich would like peace no more than Alexander, who plays at moderation to fool my father-in-law —who perhaps wished for peace at Frankfort, but who wishes no more of it than the rest of them, now that he has had a taste of success, and hopes to take his bit of France and get into Paris. Alexander wishes to parade my capital with his Guards."

had reached Chaumont, the servants, and Vitrolles along with them, were held at that town while their masters went on to Saint-Dizier. The servants were subsequently escorted to Joinville, and then to Troyes, at which point Vitrolles was able to make his escape from the column. Cf. Vitrolles, *Mémoires*, I, 253.

[1] Napoleon reached Doulevant at 5 p.m., March 24.

"More reason, then," said I, "to make a last effort—and more reason, too, to halt the invasion at Paris by making peace, if it cannot prevent the enemy's entrance there."

"The enemy," he answered sharply, "will not dare to go in there, so long as I am at their rear."

"More reason, then," I put in, "for no delay; the pen must help the sword."

"The sword alone can win or lose this case," said the Emperor.

A little later I resumed the attack by handing him the draft of two letters to M. de Metternich. As frankly as one could, and as circumstances seemed to me to require, these letters broached the main terms of peace; they were rejected. I suggested another summary, which was no better received. During the evening the Emperor dictated still another to me; it did not suit the purpose, upon which there was a long argument. At last he pitched upon letter C of March 25, which he authorized me to complete by writing a confidential letter to go with it.

The Emperor saw M. Wessenberg, and talked with him at some length. Moreover, I had told the latter enough to show him that His Majesty had set his mind upon the sacrifices needful to make peace. I gave him transportation and money, the Chief-of-Staff added whatever else he could require, and Colonel de Galbois was told off to go with him as far as the enemy's outposts. He left in the night, taking M. de Vitrolles with him as his valet.[1] History will decide whether or not, in this instance, the Austrian Emperor, whose Minister carried the brokers of treason in his train, was treating his son-in-law as a man ought to do. When I had tried anew to insist that the Emperor ought to send one of his aides-de-camp, I could not persuade him to do it: so enraged was he over the dereliction and conduct of his father-in-law.

[1] Night of March 25–26. Caulaincourt is at fault here: vid. sup., n. 42.

Caulaincourt's Mission to Bondy

DURING the night the Emperor changed all his plans.[1] Instead of marching on Paris, as I had hoped he would do, and which probably would have retrieved everything, he was misled by the appearance of a Russian corps in the vicinity of Saint-Dizier. As on former occasions, he took this to be the Allied army.

We doubled back on Saint-Dizier, the neighbourhood of which was held by a sizeable body of Russian horse and foot commanded by Count Wintzingerode. The enemy was sent headlong, after heavy losses.[2] The Emperor, at the head of his Horse Guards, drove them to the further side of Saudrupt. The two battalions of Russian light infantry which formed the support of that corps were either captured or wiped out. Their cavalry suffered severely, too, but retired in good order. The Duke of Reggio, who had charge of the pursuit, struck out towards Bar.

Although the Emperor had just come upon the disquieting assurance that he had opposed a mere detachment, he did not alter his dispositions. Nothing could convince him that the enemy were threatening Paris, regardless of their rear, while

[1] Berthier's orders, which precipitated the battle of Saint-Dizier, were dated from Doulevant, March 25, at 9 p.m. (*Archives historiques de la guerre:* Berthier.)

[2] According to Wintzingerode's report this corps numbered only eighty-one hundred men, for he had detached three thousand Cossacks to cover Montiérender. He was attacked on the 26th by the French cavalry, Oudinot, Sébastiani, Macdonald, and Gérard. Wintzingerode was driven back, leaving five hundred dead or wounded on the field, two thousand taken prisoner, and eighteen cannon.

we were losing time in pursuit of their irregulars.[1] He went back to spend the night at Saint-Dizier; and the next day [March 27] he started for Vitry, with a view to taking it by assault.

It was raining. After their gruelling march the day before, the troops, and the artillery in particular, were doubly exhausted by marching the whole night through to regain their ground—for Vitry had full moats and a heavy garrison to shield it from sudden attack. The Prince of Neuchâtel, Ney, the Duke of Taranto, General Sébastiani, and I had our own troubles in dissuading the Emperor from ordering the assault. The Guard alone must have been put to the work if its success were to be assured; and that meant gambling with what little army we had. That was the sole consideration for which the Emperor would give up that project. Berthier and I begged him to cross the Marne at once and move by forced marches upon Paris—but all in vain. He could not believe that the enemy would let him from sight and leave him at their rear, across their lines of communication: he would not see that they were upon Arcis and the Aube. We retraced our steps sadly to Saint-Dizier.

The Emperor, whose ruling idea it was to rally his garrisons and operate against the enemy's rear, had taken no stand as yet. However, certain information and some reports that came in during the night now made him decide to give up that plan, which, in view of the desperate predicament to which Paris had been reduced by our last moves, offered perhaps the best chances of success. But the hope of arriving in time to support his lieutenants and release the latent reserves of the capital decided him to go to its rescue. Consequently, orders were to move towards Troyes by way of Doulevant where, upon his arrival, the Emperor found a note from M. Lavallette, warning him of the plots that were gaining head, of the

[1] Napoleon was astounded to find that he had engaged one of Blucher's corps under the supposition that he was attacking a detachment of Schwarzenberg's. Not until later did he learn for certain of the Allies' new plan of strategy, and their march on Paris.

enemy's approach, and of how he was threatened by perils of every sort.

The troops, worn out by our pointless march on Vitry and by the persistent bad weather, could go no further than Doulevant. The Emperor reached Troyes the following midnight.[1] Some infantrymen of the Guard, knowing that he was on ahead, came up there, too, and some of the cavalry. The rest were a day behind them. The Emperor left there at dawn [March 30] with such of the cavalry as had managed to come up. At last, at the Dollencourt bridge,[2] a postman and an agent from the Minister of Police got through to us. We learned that the Dukes of Treviso and Ragusa had been forced to double back upon Paris; that Marshal Blücher was after them with his whole force; that the Allied main army was likewise on its way there.

The Emperor was regretful over having lost so much precious time. Sensing all the consequences of that waste, he was anxious to retrieve it at any price. Additional information told of the enemy's seizure of Meaux, of their movements in force, and of the disposition of their troops for the attack on Paris.

The Emperor had already sent his chief aide-de-camp, M. Dejean, to Paris to tell the Dukes of Treviso and Ragusa to make what stand they could, and to let them know he was coming. Moreover—though I did not learn this until later, from the Duke of Treviso—the aide-de-camp was to give word of M. Wessenberg's mission, and of the supposed consent that had been given to the terms required. The purpose was to suspend hostilities; and the news actually led to the

[1] March 29. Napoleon left Doulevant at dawn (Fain, *Manuscrit de* 1814, 227). He brought up at the château de Pouilly. The cavalry of the Guard pressed on to Troyes in force; the foot bivouacked at Lusigny.

[2] Here Caulaincourt makes an error in chronology. The Dollencourt bridge is on the way from Doulevant to Troyes. It was the 29th—and not the 30th, as the text here would make it seem—that Napoleon was met by several couriers who had been delayed by the enemy at Nogent and Montereau.

sending of a flag of truce.[1] But the foe, whose resolve had been taken, would not hear a word of it; and so it served only to give them an opening to make proposals to the Duke of Treviso for a capitulation. He refused, with the dignity proper to his character. Soon afterwards the Emperor also sent M. de Girardin, the Prince of Neuchâtel's aide-de-camp, to Paris, to make certain of the state of the defences, powder magazines, food supplies, and to reassure the Parisians that the Emperor was at hand, and to see what was going on. The Guard and all the other corps were given orders to quicken their pace, and the Emperor took to the gallop, his escort following with what speed it could. When his horse was blown, the Emperor climbed into a dog-cart with the Prince of Neuchâtel; Generals Bertrand and Flahaut got with me into a postman's cab.[2]

On the way towards Fontainebleau we heard some details of the unhappy business that had taken place that morning beneath the walls of Paris. Already, there was some vague rumour of a surrender. But the Emperor, still hopeful of arriving in time to take command of the forces of the Dukes of Ragusa and Treviso, and also of the National Guard, made all the haste he could. Upon arriving at La Cour de France,[3] we made out the head of a cavalry column, the vanguard of

[1] Count Dejean had been despatched by the Emperor from Dollencourt on the 29th. He went post-haste to Paris, and, as will presently be seen, he came up with Mortier outside the Villette barrier at 4 p.m. of the 30th. Relying upon the news Dejean had brought, Mortier sent General Lapointe to ask Schwarzenberg for an armistice. The Austrian replied by sending in his declaration of March 29.

[2] It was at Villeneuve-l'Archevêque, on the Vanne, that Napoleon dismounted on March 30 and took to a wicker dog-cart lent him by a butcher. He lunched at Sens at twelve-thirty noon, and borrowed an open carriage to go on with. Gourgaud (*Bourrienne et ses erreurs*, II, 328) is mistaken in saying that Caulaincourt rode with the Emperor. Napoleon passed through Villeneuve-la-Guyard at 5 p.m., and went on towards Moret and Fontainebleau.

[3] La Cour de France was the posthouse at Fromenteau, near the springs of Juvisy. This house, which later was purchased by M. Camille Flammarion, is to-day a part of the Juvisy Observatory.

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which had already passed us as we were changing horses. General Belliard, in command of the squadrons, came to the Emperor, who had got down while the relay was being made; and thus the surrender of the capital was announced to him.[1] Meanwhile the squadrons went on defiling. The Dukes of Ragusa and Treviso were further to the rear, and a portion of the army along with them. The Emperor, who was talking by the roadside with General Belliard, called the Prince of Neuchâtel and me to come and hear the retailing of the sorry news. He was plying that General with questions as to matters which the latter, who had come with the army from the outskirts of Paris, could not possibly be informed of. During those first moments, in his haste to know all that had happened—to view from every side the impending dangers which he instantly perceived—the Emperor scarcely gave him time to answer.

General Belliard said again that he was there with his cavalry: that the remainder of the forces were behind him. He went on to say that the Empress and the King of Rome had left for Rambouillet[2] two days before, after there had been a council-meeting. The whole Ministry had followed them. The troops had made a fight of it, clear into ——,[3]

Fain (*Manuscrit de* 1814, 229), places Napoleon's arrival at La Cour de France at 10 p.m.; according to Gourgaud (*Bourrienne et ses erreurs*, II, 329), it was about an hour later.

[1] The capitulation of Paris was not signed by Marmont and the Allied representatives until 2 a.m., March 31. Well before that time, however, Marmont had ordered his troops to fall back towards Essonnes. Belliard's cavalry formed the van of the column. "I halted at La Cour de France to take position and spend the night there. An Imperial courier, coming from Fontainebleau, arrived at that moment and announced that His Majesty was close at his heels. The Emperor came up: he was alarmed by these troop movements. 'Who is there?' he demanded, when his carriage had stopped. The courier answered: 'It is General Belliard, Sire.' I was at the carriage-door. He threw it open, sprang to the ground, and drew me out on to the highway." (Belliard, *Mémoires*, I, 171.)

[2] The Empress had quitted Paris for Blois at 10 a.m., March 29.

[3] Caulaincourt has left a blank here.

with uncommon spirit and often with their share of the honours, though they were outnumbered at all points. Prince Joseph had ordered the surrender, in the belief that to hold out any longer would be a vain risk both for the troops and Paris. The Duke of Ragusa had thereupon treated with the enemy; but the Duke of Treviso, who did not receive authorization to do so until a long while later, had refused to discuss, even in principle, the proposals that the enemy had made to him. (He had received those proposals as a consequence of the overtures he had been in a position to make by following the orders brought by General Dejean. Under those orders the Marshal was required to send notice to the enemy outposts that, since His Majesty had agreed to the proposals received, the bases of a peace were about to be signed.)[1] General Belliard, who knew these details only in brief, could give the Emperor no satisfaction either about the manoeuvring of the troops after they had left the banks of the Aisne, or about the battle of Paris.

The Emperor was dismayed by the first words on the surrender of Paris. He listened with a dejected air; but this first impression, though dreadful, was brief.

"What cowardice . . ." was his first remark. "Surrender! . . . Joseph has ruined everything. . . . Four hours too late! . . . If I had come four hours sooner, all would have been saved," he added in sorrowful tones. And then, recovering his wonted vigour, he said: "Four hours have confounded everything; in a few hours the courage and devotion of my good Parisians can regain it all. My carriage, Caulaincourt: on to Paris! I shall put myself at the head of the National Guard and the troops: we will restore matters. . . . General Belliard, order the troops to face about."

As he spoke, he started hurrying down the road to Paris. Everyone followed sadly after him. A moment later, when

[1] This notice from the Emperor to Marmont was based on the letters sent by Wessenberg's hand from Doulevant. The Emperor hoped that when this notice was passed on to the Austrians it would serve to gain time, even though it did not check the enemy's movements. (*Caulaincourt's* note.)

he saw that his carriage did not come up as he had ordered, he turned on his heel to go and meet it, as if by way of hastening his departure.

"Let's be off," he said impatiently. "My carriage, Caulaincourt; let's lose no time."

General Belliard thereupon pointed out to him that, since the act of capitulation had been signed, it would be impossible to disregard it; that he would find no more troops in Paris; that he could not therefore go to the capital in person. . . .

The Emperor, possessed by his notion, would neither listen to the General's explanation nor admit the truth of it. He went on complaining about one's haste to surrender; and he reiterated with heat that he would put himself at the head of the National Guard, that the whole army would rally to him within thirty-six hours, that he would put things back in shape. It was in vain that General Belliard told him how improbable it was that he could rouse the fighting spirit of a citizenry who knew all about the surrender, and who believed that because of it they were safe from all the dangers he was bound to force upon them! Or that under the terms of the agreement, the National Guard was patrolling the city barriers; wherefore the Allies, who were not, as a matter of fact, to take over until seven o'clock on the morrow, might very well have penetrated beyond all the posts, or else have taken contiguous positions on the hither side. Or in brief, that he would be laying himself open to capture for nothing. The Emperor paid no heed to those remarks. He called anew for his carriage, and renewed his order for General Belliard and the cavalry to follow him.

"What agreement is this? What right had anyone to make it?" he went on. "What has become of the Minister of War? Where is Joseph? What is he about? . . ."

General Belliard answered that neither of them had been seen throughout the affair; or at least not by the Duke of Treviso's corps, to which he belonged. The Emperor went on calling for his carriage. It did not budge. He resumed his violent questioning.

"They make nothing but blunders when I am away from

there," he said. "They made no use of the National Guard which, with a strong hand to guide it, could very well have held the fortifications whilst the regulars were blocking the approaches. There were means and to spare for holding out for forty-eight hours and giving the army time to come up. Paris had over two hundred pieces of artillery and a month's army stores; enough, over all, to give it ten times the means it needed for weathering the storm—if there had been a little show of energy. Joseph thinks himself fit to be a king: he is foolish enough to think he is a great general besides: and he is nothing but a ——." And then he went on to complain of the Minister of War, who should have strengthened the defences on Montmartre and all along the line; and he added: "Clarke is nothing but a head book-keeper turned vain. I decided long ago that he was not fit to be Minister. Now I see him he is just like Frochot, a traitor. That is what Savary always told me. I should have taken his word for it."

While talking thus the Emperor had turned on his tracks, started towards Paris, checked himself, and set off again at a rapid pace. When he saw the head of General Curial's column,[1] he halted and sent for the General—who had remained in Paris. Seeing at last that his infantry really was too far away to reach the capital in time, he surrendered to our arguments and gave over his plan for going there.

General Belliard went back to his corps, which had continued on the march, to take position beyond Essonnes as the Emperor had ordered him to do. His Majesty went on walking along the road with the Prince of Neuchâtel and me. He kept silent and walked fast, occasionally letting out a deep sigh, or a few words which showed that he was struck by the whole weight of foreseen calamity. Drawing me aside, he told me again what he had told us before. He vented his dissatisfaction particularly upon his brother and the Ministers of War and of Police who, he said, ought not to have left Paris until the moment of the enemy's entry there.

[1] Curial had command of the first division of the Young Guard (Mortier). At that time, says Belliard, the Emperor was nearly three miles from La Cour de France on the way to Paris.

"Four hours too late," he repeated; "what a fatality! . . . They all lost their heads. . . . And yet they knew that I was to the rear of the enemy, who would have been risking too much by chancing anything, with me so close at hand, if they had held out. It was a simple matter to carry the day. . . . There is some intrigue off yonder," he added. "Does anyone know the mood of the populace? What do the troops say? What did Belliard tell you? Has anybody learned something from the officers? If I were known to be in Paris, the people would rise against the Cossacks. . . . What haste they are in! Curial's men are here already! . . . Why isn't he at their head? . . . Joseph has lost me Spain; he loses me Paris. This business means the loss of France, Caulaincourt."

I tried vainly to offer him hopes which I did not have myself. He said:

"Undoubtedly everything could be retrieved, and this disgraceful surrender would be the very means of saving everything, if I had my forces at hand to attack the enemy to-morrow amid the frenzy of their success and their entry into Paris; but it will take me at least three days to rally jaded troops. . . . We will fight, Caulaincourt, for it would be better to die sword in hand than to humiliate oneself in the sight of foreigners."

After a long silence, he resumed:

"On second thought, the issue is not yet closed. If I have backing, the capture of Paris will be the sign of salvation. With no further cause for caution—with my movements no longer secondary to a consideration of that importance—I shall be master of my own manoeuvres, and the foolhardiness that led the enemy to steal three marches on us will cost them dear."

There followed a long silence, broken once in a while by bitter remarks about the state of affairs and about sundry individuals; and then we rejoined the Prince of Neuchâtel near the posthouse. The Emperor went inside.[1] We had

[1] According to his *Mémoires* (I, 179), Belliard did not leave Napoleon until the latter had gone into the posthouse. He adds: "When we were at the house where it was light, I carefully scanned

Continued on next page

been walking for over two hours. He sat down at a table, propped his head between his hands, and remained for a long while thus.

When the Prince of Neuchâtel and I wished to go out for a moment, he bade us remain, but without a word further. Scarcely lowering our voices, Berthier and I passed remarks about the state of affairs. Did the Emperor give ear to us, or was he lost in reflexion? He confined himself to asking frequently if there were no news from Paris. He hoped to learn some further details when Dejean and de Girardin returned; and he was expecting M. de Flahaut as well, whom also he had sent to the capital.[1] He sighed heavily and often, as we did too, and now and then he exclaimed:

"Joseph has ruined everything! The idea of not holding out for a day with twenty-five thousand National Guard and fifty thousand men in the suburbs who have seen service and are as willing as the troops! Clarke never did a thing to aid the defence. The Ministers of War and of Police should have been the last to leave—and they thought only of their own safety. . . . All is lost."

We tried vainly to reassure him about the sequel of that occupation: in vain did I suggest to him that, in this instance, France was where the army was; that the vital matters were to reassemble the army and to keep up his own courage; that Paris held many stout citizens, good men and true.

"You do not know men," he told me, "and what can be done in a town like that by the intrigues of a few traitors, under such serious circumstances and the sway of vengeance and foreign bayonets."

At last, after two hours of yet sadder silence, the need to

the Emperor's face, which I had not been able to see in the darkness along the road. His looks were not at all changed, nor could one see a trace of the impression that must have been made on him by what he had just learned. He was very tired."

[1] Napoleon had sent Flahaut from La Cour de France to Paris with orders for Marmont, who was thus instructed to break off the negotiations if time still permitted, and to carry on with the defence.

pour out the grief that was vexing him made him join in our conversation.

"Four hours sooner," he exclaimed, "and I had saved France! Not even to hold out for four hours. . . . A little vigour and the enemy was lost! Paris would have been the invader's tomb. It will take three days for me to gather my forces. . . . What doings there will be between now and then!"

We let him see our astonishment that the Empress and the King of Rome had left so hastily—a departure that had been bound to dishearten everyone and disrupt everything.

"Her presence would have opened the door to intrigues of a far different kind," he answered; "you don't know what is going on. . . ." Without explaining himself further, he complained afresh of his brother, adding that the Minister of War ought only to have made his exit with the last platoon.

I brought forward the suggestion that the Prince of Neuchâtel be sent as envoy to Paris and the Allies. In the capital, he would overawe them on account of the prestige that he enjoyed and the confidence with which the Emperor had always honoured him. Among the Allies, he would be accepted and even well received on account of his character, and also because of his connexion with Prince Schwarzenberg. Berthier excused himself, under pretext that he was not acquainted with the ministers with whom he should have to deal; besides Prince Schwarzenberg could not be the one entrusted with those matters of diplomacy, about which he himself was uninformed. It was plain to be seen that he did not care to undertake the mission. The Emperor had just that moment asked him for particulars about the marching orders that had been given to the troops, so as to assure himself that there was no way of speeding up their movement; and the Prince went out to look for the original copies. I again pointed out to His Majesty how advantageous it would be, in view of his grave plight, to send the Chief-of-Staff—and the more especially so, because of the difficulty that it was probable one would have in getting a hearing, or perhaps even a reception at the enemy's Headquarters. I suggested to him

that it would take nothing less than the presence of the Prince of Neuchâtel in Paris to overawe the ill-disposed there, and the faint-hearted, and to encourage the worthy.

"Berthier is not the man for this mission," the Emperor told me. "He has too small a character; he is an old granny. . . . He would lose his head, were he never so attached to me. . . . They would sway him as they pleased. Besides, these *démarches* lead to nothing. I told you long ago that the enemy does not wish to treat. There is but one way of safety. Paris must be the tomb of the invaders. If I had my army at hand to-night, not one of them would get away. The occupation of Paris by the enemy—their longing to strut before the ladies, and to let the fine Prussian cut a figure there—this should have been the saving of us and the seal of doom for the Allies. Had I been seconded, not one of them would have escaped out of France. All was saved if Paris had been held for thirty-six hours, or if I had reached there this morning. They have lost their heads—and France. . . .

"Savary has been duped by the faction that declared its intentions by wishing to keep the Empress at Paris. Exposed to the scheming of a number of traitors, one would have been made their tool; one might have been implicated. . . . Those plots will reveal themselves: I know the whole story. . . . Because they have no vision, my vigour galls them and my constancy wears them out. Leaders and led alike, they none of them see that I am all the warranty they have. . . . France needs me more to-day than I need her, for what is the Throne worth to me? I will not keep it if it is disgraced. . . . Safety resides in me alone. . . . Without me, you lapse into revolutions . . . reactions. . . . You are all of you dupes of the enemy's proposals: for even the shameful terms of Châtillon are so much bait. Subversion is what they are after. England and Alexander have not varied in that respect. If I had taken their ministers' word for it, and everybody else's, and yours first of all, we should have got down on our knees to gain that peace which cannot mean our safety, and which is made impossible by bad faith and secret motives on the enemy's part. When they have taken over our fortresses and organized their

forces within that shelter, that very day will see their claims enlarged; it is double dealing: you would have proof of it at once if I decided to subscribe. A few months more of endurance, and we should have emerged as much stronger from this conflict as the spirit and courage of the country had been more sternly tested."

The Prince of Neuchâtel returned. The Emperor took his map and debated various military problems. He held to the notion of hastening the army's arrival; and he pursued several reflexions about the perils of the Paris vicinity, and about how the minds of the leaders could be changed by events. He resolved to make a surprise attack on the invaders, to rouse the suburbs and the National Guard as he did so, and thus put the enemy between two fires. He cried out with grief, again and again: "To think of Paris, the Capital of Civilization, in the hands of the barbarians! . . . That great city shall be their tomb! . . ." And after a brief silence, he went on: "But these generals who have already quitted their troops, and in so vital a moment—what are they up to? Shall I be able to count on them? There are schemers enough in Paris. Who knows what will happen in to-morrow's business?" Another silence, and then: "The soldiers, the gallant officers, they will not betray me; there are plenty of brave fellows that I can count on. Mortier is a good, sound man. Marmont has been brought up in my camp; I have been a father to him. He may have been wanting in vigour, may have done something stupid, but it is not in him to be a traitor. . . ."

He ordered the Prince of Neuchâtel to despatch fresh officers to all the army corps, so as to speed their progress to the utmost. "Tell them," he added, "that the safety of Home and Emperor depends upon the speed of their coming; that will give wings to my men of Champaubert and Montmirail."

The Emperor then went on to say that he might also operate along the Loire, make contact with his troops in the Midi, have Augereau's army[1] move up. Soult, he said, was a man

[1] The Duke of Castiglione had command of the army that had been formed at Lyons with detachments drawn from the Catalonian forces and the Alpine posts.

of spirit, able to head off the English and contest his ground step by step as long as he had a detachment left to him.[1] He adverted over and over to the fact that they must have been panic-stricken to have surrendered Paris so readily, and that his brother Joseph was what he called a——.

There followed a long silence, a sort of drowsiness consequent upon dejection, during which time he leant his elbows on the table and clutched his head between his hands. Then the Emperor rose from his chair, gave a lively glance about the room where he found himself, and told us that his plan of strategy ought not to preclude one final effort, were it only to keep up the hope of a speedy deliverance of Paris, and by the same token to find out whether the Allies were scheming for a peace or an overthrow.

"No doubt," said he, "there would have been everything to gain by entertaining proposals before the enemy had entered Paris. That would have cut off many intrigues—would have set many minds at rest. But we have no time . . . and besides, we shall find out about the schemes of the Allies from the way the offers are received."

Carried away by his ideas, the Emperor added in a sharp tone:

"Come on now, Caulaincourt! It is time to be off; go and save France and your Emperor. Do what you can. They will lay hard terms upon us; but under these circumstances, I entrust myself to your honour as a Frenchman and to the loyalty, and the affection, too, which you have shown towards me."

The Emperor dictated a number of memorandums for me—or powers of attorney, perhaps—to the Prince of Neuchâtel. He did this without resigning himself to accept the limits of Old France, and without committing himself upon a single point—not even in regard to his plenipotentiary. He sought ever to hold fast to the power to grant or refuse, according to the drift of circumstance, and without declaring himself in respect of the concessions which, by word of

[1] The Duke of Dalmatia, commanding the Southern forces, was on the point of fighting the battle of Toulouse, April 10.

mouth, he pronounced it indispensable to make, but which he would not consent to in writing. One may say that he had no pity for the man whom he charged with such a load of responsibility, yet before whom he haggled, so to speak, for the power to repudiate him at a pinch. He tore up several sheets of instructions which, as he was forced to agree, did not say what had to be said; and at last he settled upon the briefest of orders.[1]

That was no time to cast up his responsibility or to trade upon his woe. I did not, therefore, allow myself the slightest reflexion, out of admiration for his strength of character—for that proud spirit which, beneath this urgent peril, could make him prefer the loss of his throne to what he called the disgrace of subscribing to some certain sacrifices. I took to heart everything besides that weighed so heavily upon his misfortune. The Emperor thereupon chatted with me about the concessions to which he could agree. He made no specific mention of the required sacrifices; it seemed to lie beyond his strength to speak those words. When I was taking leave of him, he added sorrowfully:

"You will arrive too late: the Parisian authorities will be afraid of compromising the citizens in the enemy's regard. They will not wish to listen to you because our enemies have some further plans, which they have not announced as yet. Apart from that, you shall decide what it is that we can count on. Your errand will serve me in that respect. If you see that safety remains in our courage alone, we will make a fight for it and go out gloriously."

As you see from these directions which the Emperor gave me, he was still far from submitting to all the terms they had wished to impose on him. At that moment the thing most vital to him was to dispel the first storm-clouds—to prevent alien subversion from forcing him to subscribe to everything. He still was not open to the conviction that, even though his wife and son were not in the hands of the enemy, the latter

[1] This order, dated from La Cour de France, March 31, 1814, is published in the *Correspondance de Napoléon*, 21546. The date is noteworthy: it was already past midnight.

had made up their minds to put him out of their way. Even then the sacrifices that he was making were so great, and his position was so critical, that I could not bear to argue with him: that would have crushed him completely. I therefore insisted only that he should send the Prince of Neuchâtel, or somebody else, along with me; but he persistently refused.

"You can see," he told me, "that I have none but him at my side. I must have him, at this moment, to convey orders to the army, which is accustomed to obeying him as it would me."[1]

The perils of the Emperor's position were manifest: it was time to be guided by one's loyalty alone. At seven in the morning I was set down in front of the Hôtel de Ville.[2] I asked to be shown before the City Council; it had not yet convened. I asked to speak with the Prefect [of the Seine]; he and the Prefect of Police had gone to Allied Headquarters.[3] They had left at 1 a.m., in company with several staff officers of the National Guard. I learned, too, that the enemy's forces would enter Paris at ten o'clock. My course was plain; I had not a moment to lose. I mounted my aide-de-camp's horse (for I had chanced to meet him at the city gate where, after an errand to Paris had involved him in yesterday's battle, he was on his way back to us with some of our rear-guard). I set off at once for the Bondy toll-gate. In the Rue Saint-Martin I met one of the Imperial Chamberlains, Count Brancas, Adjutant of the National Guard. He came up with me and protested his loyalty and devotion to the

[1] Napoleon stopped at La Cour de France until four o'clock in the morning. A courier, sent back from the gate of Paris by the Duke of Vicenza, then told him that the capitulation had definitely been signed; and Flahaut, returning from his trip to the capital, handed him a panic-stricken letter from Marmont. Napoleon had his carriage brought up and left for Fontainebleau, where he arrived at 6 a.m. See *Bourrienne et ses erreurs*, II, 330, Gourgaud's Narration.

[2] Of Paris. March 31.

[3] The Allies had their headquarters at the Château de Bondy, where the Tsar of Russia had put up.

Emperor, though I had done nothing to provoke him to do so.[1]

As luck would have it, the gate was being patrolled by chasseurs of the Russian Guard. This accident favoured my passage, for most of the officers knew me. I made myself out to be a member of the Parisian Committee with Power to Act, which they had let through during the night, and which, so I said, I had not arrived in time to join up with. After much parleying back and forth the officers decided to let me pass, thanks to my status as member of that committee, which had been authorized to appear before the Tsar Alexander. M. Orloff, an officer of the General Staff, was assigned to escort me. He took me to the vanguard commandery, and then to one post after another. The lot of them thought that I ought to be held up until there was some reply from Headquarters, which had been informed of my arrival. Most of those gentlemen knew me; and so loud was my insistence that the deputation was incomplete without me, and therefore powerless, that they let me by—though more through courtesy than conviction. Even so, my escort was instructed to hold me at a reasonable distance from Headquarters, whither the general-in-command of the vanguard had sent M. Orloff to give warning.

When I came inside the enemy lines, the first thing I noticed was the white scarf that everyone wore looped from the left shoulder. I did not know what to make of those strange insignia—the more especially, since I had seen nothing like them on the troops I had caught sight of a few days earlier. Nothing like that had ever been seen before. My mind revolved a thousand speculations—first as to the reason for such novel insignia, and then as to the effect that might ensue. I was anxious to know about this, yet without betraying my

[1] Louis-Albert de Villars-Brancas, Duke of Cereste (1775–1851), had been Chamberlain to the Emperor since 1807. It is with sly deliberation that Caulaincourt stresses this official's loyalty as of March 31, for we shall see later that Brancas was to have a quick change of opinion and to distinguish himself presently through his Royalist enthusiasm.

uneasiness. As we rode along, I asked the officer beside me: "Since when have you been using this Swedish decoration? Is it a compliment to your friend Bernadotte?" He answered —and a number of responsible persons confirmed him afterwards—that the Allied troops had had no means of recognizing one another in skirmishes, and so they had frequently fallen to sabring one another; and that this had been especially true in their encounter with General Pacthod, who had confronted their cavalry so bravely in the fields of the Champagne.[1] A number of officers, and an Englishman[2] in particular, had thus been wounded by their own men. And so, said he, the whole of their establishment had been ordered to wear what he called "this handkerchief" on their left arms, to prevent similar mistakes. Without my asking him, he added that they had chosen that badge because it was the only one that every soldier had ready to his hand. That explanation set my mind at rest about the purpose of the insignia, but did not reassure me about the effect they might have, should intrigues grow rife in Paris.

When I was three miles from Bondy, I met the two carriage-loads of Parisian authority.[3] I brought them to a stand,

[1] On March 25, 1814, during the engagement at La Fère-Champenoise, General Vassilichikov turned loose with his cannon against the Twenty-third of the Russian field-artillery. There were several casualties at Alexander's side. Cf. H. Houssaye, 1814, 376.

[2] According to Langeron the incident of an Englishman being wounded by Cossacks occurred at the battle of La Rothière, February 1, 1814.

[3] Pasquier (*Mémoires*, II, 249) says: "We were a bare two hundred yards from the village of Bondy when I saw the Duke of Vicenza by the wayside. He was on foot, and threw himself at my carriage-door when he recognized me. . . . I learned shortly that he had been there for some time, unable to gain entry to the village." H. Houssaye (1814, 545) has expressed surprise over Caulaincourt's late arrival at Bondy, considering that the credentials which he held from Napoleon made him virtually the Emperor's trustee, and that his presence might therefore have altered the course of events. Houssaye's astonishment proceeds from a miscalculation of time: he assumes that the Duke of Vicenza could have reached the Hôtel de Ville during the night, before the Parisian delegates had left for Bondy. It was impossible, however,

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despite the objections of their escorting officers and mine. The Prefects were astonished at the sight of me, and were disconcerted at having to speak with me under the observing eyes of foreign officers. They stared at me coldly. I told them that I carried orders and credentials from the Emperor. They answered that they had just received the Tsar Alexander's orders relative to the surrender, and had turned the city over to him. Baron Pasquier got down from his carriage and spoke sorrowfully with me for a moment, saying that the Tsar seemed strongly aroused against the Emperor Napoleon, about whom he had spoken severely; but that his remarks about Paris had been friendly and reassuring—as had been the tone of Prince Schwarzenberg's, also. He wished to tell me what had been said, but they would not let him finish. The Russian officers who were with the city officials insisted that the carriages should move along; those who escorted me would not hear of my keeping up that conversation: and so they parted us. The Prefects told me that the impending entry of the Allied forces into Paris made their presence indispensable in the city. They barely gave me time to say that I would see them there, at the Prefecture of Police, upon my return. The Russians ordered us about as if we were servants. The Prefects showed me nothing but embarrassment: the officers of the National Guard, and one of them in particular, seemed anxious only to put distance between us. This reception enabled me to judge how slight already was the interest which many felt in the cause committed to my charge. I need hardly say what thoughts this meeting put into my head, or how my heart sank at the hostile reception accorded me by a group from my own side. It was to sink more and more as time

for Caulaincourt to reach Paris that soon. We are disposed to credit his own statement, as given above, that he entered the Place de Grève at 7 a.m.; nor does this hour seem unlikely when one considers that Napoleon had not arrived at La Cour de France until ten the night before, at the earliest; that the Emperor's vacillation, and the drawing-up of his orders (dated March 31, and therefore after midnight), had taken considerable time; that it is twelve miles from Fromenteau to Paris; and that the way was blocked with Mortier's troops.

went on; for I received nothing but woeful impressions thenceforward. The Emperor, though never so blind to the perils of his situation, had foreseen all too clearly what was going to happen. This particular instance was the first of many such proofs that awaited me—and it was one of the sorriest. Never shall I forget that, of his own accord, one of the National Guard officers, who was in those carriages, urged the coachman to whip up.

Within a mile of Bondy my escorting officers made me halt. In a minute or so, a member of their General Staff came up to tell me that he was followed by Count Nesselrode, who was on his way to discuss the purpose of my errand with me. He arrived a few moments later, and said:

"Your coming here now is a fool's errand: Châtillon was the place to negotiate. The Emperor Napoleon has always refused to make peace—and so to-day the sovereigns will no longer deal with him. Nothing can keep us out of Paris; we are now on our way in. That city is being ruled by the terms of surrender, as are its officials, whom the Tsar Alexander has received in a friendly spirit; and they have been empowered to take full charge. They know that the Tsar and the Allied forces are their friends; that this is a war to make peace, which has always been our desire, but which you have steadily declined. They know, too, that we are bringing peace to Paris—and that we have come here to look for it only because you refused it to us at Châtillon. The Tsar cannot receive you just now—there is not even time for a longer chat—for our columns are on the move, you see."[1]

[1] Nesselrode (*Lettres et papiers du chancelier comte de Nesselrode*, II, 112) has this to say of the interview in question: "It had been announced (at Bondy) a few moments before that the Duke of Vicenza was at hand, charged with a message from Napoleon. The Tsar was unwilling that he should communicate with the deputation, and bade me take him to the bottom of the garden and chat there with him during the audience. When that was over, the deputation withdrew and straightway the Tsar sent for me to present M. de Caulaincourt." The concurring accounts of Pasquier and Caulaincourt prove Nesselrode at fault in his timing of this incident.

I insisted that the Tsar Alexander must see me, were it only for a moment. "Old friendship," said I, "will forbid his denying me this favour, now that I am so near at hand, and come on a peaceful errand." And then I went on to say that our army was still unaffected, and that it had been reinforced as a result of our retreat, and by our troops from the Midi. I told him that the war had not been ended by their reaching Paris ahead of us; that I possessed the fullest power to act; and that to conclude a peace beneath the walls of the capital was so glorious a matter that the Tsar Alexander could not lightly refuse it—the more especially, since his entry would not thereby be prevented, were that the sole end he had in view. . . . Moreover, I said, we had our troops at hand—there was nothing to hold us back—and the fortunes of war were here to-day and gone to-morrow. . . . I maintained that the Parisian officials were helpless without me, because authorization lay in my hands alone; wherefore I was the sole head of administration, with whom they would have to deal for the sustenance of their army—if for no other reason.

Some of my statements did not strike Count Nesselrode as altogether sound; but at least he let me wait for the Tsar's reply to the report of our conversation.

The Grand Duke Constantine came up a moment later, and spoke with me of everything but politics.[1] He was kindly in speech and manner, and studious—even went out of his way to praise our troops, but more particularly General Pacthod's handsome performance. . . .[2] He spoke with me of Petersburg—of things that had happened while I was there—of his concern for the prisoners they had made, and for our wounded. In brief, I cannot speak too highly of his tactful discourse.

[1] Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich, Alexander's brother.

[2] On March 25, at the engagement of La Fère-Champenoise, Grand Duke Constantine, commanding the Russian cavalry of the reserve, had proceeded against the French left and brought off several charges with éclat. Pacthod's division (Eleventh Corps) was composed almost wholly of National Guardsmen and raw recruits.

After forty-five minutes of this, one of the Tsar Alexander's Household Staff came to fetch me.[1] The Tsar received me at once, and greeted me with warmth, as in the old days—or should I say, with his native kindliness? "The Duke of Vicenza—the friend that is always welcome:" said he, embracing me.

What I had told Count Nesselrode, I now repeated to the Tsar; and I bore down particularly upon the point of the Emperor's having named me head-administrator of Paris so that the Russian forces might have preferential treatment there. Under these unhappy circumstances, said I, the Emperor had felt that none could be more welcome to the Tsar than I was. I emphasized that I came armed with the Emperor's full powers to arrange and sign a peace . . . and so forth, and so on; and that, though it would doubtless be painful for the Emperor to subject France to all the sacrifices they meant to lay upon her, still, since we had done all we could to prevent the evil day, we should at least enjoy the consoling thought that we had not submitted to necessity without putting up a creditable fight.

The Tsar responded that he had given his orders at first hand to the officials of Paris, who had just been to see him . . .; that he came bringing peace and not the sword . . .; that I must surely know his personal and sovereign motives, and that prosperity could affect him no more than could adversity . . . and so on, and so forth. He praised the behaviour of our troops, of our civilians; and he said again and again that he was free from personal malice and wished only to bring peace to the world. No matter what my duties were, said he, he would always be glad to see me at his side; circumstances alone had prevented our meeting in Saxony and at Prague. He said many a flattering thing about me personally—warning me, meanwhile, to consider myself merely as the bearer of a

[1] Pasquier (*Mémoires*, II, 251) makes out that Caulaincourt was unable to gain audience with Alexander. However, for confirmation of the fact of this interview, see Stewart, *Correspondance of Viscount Castlereagh*, London, 1848–1835, V, 417: Stewart to Lord Bathurst, April 1, 1814.

flag of truce. He told me not to meddle in anything at Paris until he had informed me what his intentions were—and the intentions of his allies—and what status they would grant me there. He would send for me later, he said, to discuss the position.

The Tsar said, furthermore, that I ought to go and see the King of Prussia and Prince Schwarzenberg, without whose consent he was unwilling to act. As to the Emperor Napoleon: he, said the Tsar, had shown himself so bellicose, during the last negotiations, that all the Sovereign Rulers—who felt sure, anyway, that there could be no peace for them while he was at large—had unanimously decided to have no further dealings with him.[1] At heart, the Tsar felt, France must be as weary of Napoleon's government as Europe was. The whole world needed a breathing-spell—and therefore a Balance of Power to provide it.

I cannot express what I felt as I heard that statement made in the name of the Sovereign Powers. I choked back my emotions, however, and remarked to the Tsar that surely he could not have been counting upon the Emperor to make peace at Châtillon, since, as he well knew, the Allied terms had altered with each day's doings after the Frankfort conference. Moreover, I ventured, I had agreed to the Frankfort terms from the outset—and likewise to subsequent proposals, whereby their original offers to us had been noticeably cut down. The Tsar emphatically declined to discuss this point, or even to reply. I then spoke of the Doulevant offers to Prince Metternich, concerning further sacrifices that we were ready to make; and I took occasion here to point out that the date of those despatches went to prove that the Emperor's desire for world peace had but little to do with the fortunes of the day. In this instance, said I, the Tsar's magnanimity might add still further to his fame. The Parisians already thought him a man of goodwill, whose hostility to them they could not believe in: therefore the

[1] Note that the official declaration to this effect was not decided upon until the night of March 31, during the session held at Talleyrand's.

signing of to-day's peace would only add to his credit, by putting a prompt end to the suffering of whole peoples—whose benefactor he would thus become—and would add a brighter glory to his triumph.

The Tsar's answer was that he could do nothing without consulting his allies; that since neither they nor their representatives were available,[1] his hands were tied. And then he said once more how friendly was his invasion of Paris; how weary he knew the French to be of the Emperor's rule, and how eager for a change from it—not to speak of how helpful such a shift would be for the general good, for his own interest, and perhaps for France as well. In short, he would ask nothing of France, beyond the proof of her feelings—and the assurance of a lasting peace for himself and the whole of Europe.

I told the Tsar that he was mistaken about the French temper—as he had been, and would find out that he had been, about the temper of Paris. If factious persons had told him otherwise, he would soon find the preponderance of right-thinking men against him. As I told the Tsar, the Emperor's misfortunes had not been sufficient to wipe out either his glory or the respect that was demanded by his institutions. Everyone, I added, was still conscious of the oath of allegiance that had been sworn to the Emperor and repeated to his son, whose rights—and his family's—remained sacred in the people's regard. And, said I, it was none of the Tsar's business to encourage the populace in the precedent of turning upon a monarch merely because he was unfortunate. In Paris, so I told him, the Tsar would find unhappy Frenchmen a-plenty, but no traitors—a sentiment which seemed to touch him, for he gave my arm a kindly squeeze. His Majesty then permitted me to question whether Austria could have agreed to what I had been told was the consensus of the Sovereign Powers. Quick as a flash, he answered that Austria had turned her coat as soon as she felt that the Emperor was unwilling to agree to the peace proposals made two months earlier—

[1] At this date, March 31, the Emperor of Austria and Metternich were still at Dijon, as was Lord Castlereagh.

wherefore, in his opinion, I would find Austria more inveterate against Napoleon than all the rest; as I would presently discover. (I was soon, alas, to find him all too well advised.)

I could but urge anew upon the Tsar that, in view of the Allied position, a treaty of peace was bound to be worth something if it meant no further conflict; that Paris was not France . . .; and that the fact that they would have to keep Paris in hand while there was fighting beneath its walls was something which the Emperor would know how to capitalize upon if his present sacrifices were not enough to secure peace. I went on talking; and the Tsar heard me out with kindness, and even as though he were interested.

He answered that he was in as sound a position as I was to judge of what chance the Allies had of a success in battle. He would gladly yield to none, said he, in his respect for the Emperor's talents in the field, and for the valour of our troops; but that, even though the present trials and tribulations were what I represented them to be, he still could not affect the decision of all the cabinets of Europe in an affair of this importance. If they had to withdraw from Paris, they would only come back again . . . a contingency which we must have foreseen, long since. It had lain in the Emperor's power alone, said the Tsar, to avoid this—therefore there should not have been a moment's delay in approving the terms which I had subscribed to. I countered by saying that the Allies ought to have accepted those terms when I proposed them, had peace alone been their objective.

With that he dismissed me, saying, by way of farewell, that he would make no effort to sway opinion about the Emperor, either pro or con; that he would be guided only by the best people, whose judgement would be influenced by no pressure whatsoever. . . . If, said he, we still wished to keep the Emperor Napoleon after all the harm he had done us, there would be no objection beyond certain precautionary guarantees—and those only because Europe could not forget what she had had to submit to. He then gave me leave to go back to Paris, ordered me to attend him upon his arrival there, and led me to think that perhaps I should have an answer that

night. He added that maybe between now and then he would see the King of Prussia, Prince Schwarzenberg, and the British Ministers, without whose advice he was powerless to speak.

I asked the Tsar where he expected to put up. He was careful to reject the notion of stopping at the Tuileries, and told me that he contemplated no finer accommodations than they were preparing for the other Allied Sovereigns. The Elysée had been mentioned, so he told me; but out of respect for the Emperor, he had refused to take up one of the Imperial Residences. I suggested that, since the King of Prussia had pre-empted the Viceroy's lodgings in the Rue de Lille, His Majesty might find other quarters, perhaps even more commodious than the Elysée, in M. de Talleyrand's town-house in the Rue de Varennes, which the Emperor had bought. After the Tsar had chatted with me a moment about trifles, he remarked that M. de Nesselrode and Count Tolstoi had charge of his accommodation: and so I was dismissed.

Upon leaving the Tsar, I took his advice and went to see Prince Schwarzenberg, who was lodged under the same roof. I had a cold reception . . ., but showed him the drafts of the letters sent from Doulevant to M. de Metternich—and which I pointed out to the Prince by date, as I had to the Tsar, in substantiation of the Emperor's eagerness for the peace which he was now accused of rejecting. I put him in mind of Metternich's overtures to M. de Rumigny, and handed him the Prince's final letters, the tone of which was far from extreme.[1]

Schwarzenberg took the merest glance at the evidence. He declined sharply to hear of any negotiating on the Emperor's behalf, or his son's; and he appeared somewhat less

[1] Following the break-up of the Congress of Châtillon, Caulaincourt had sent Rumigny to Metternich, who was then at Troyes. The Chancellor of Austria had said: "We can tell the Emperor Napoleon that we will second him if he really wishes peace; but to that end—seeing that the Châtillon conference has been broken off—he must propose that the ministers of the Great Powers form a congress and begin a fresh discussion which shall have a speedy outcome." (Rumigny's note, autograph, *Archives de Caulaincourt*, file 12.)

than indifferent to the claims of the Empress. He would speak to me of nothing but Europe's broader interests, so called, which, he kept saying, ought to supersede all other considerations—even those of kinship. I reported to him, but in vain, the Tsar's more kindly and more reassuring remarks; and in so doing, I suggested to him that, leaving aside all question of politics, geography, and even of the Emperor Napoleon, Austria had two interests here at stake: the son's claims, and the mother's.

Vainly, too, did I suggest that these questions wore a different aspect for Austria from what they did for Russia . . .; that if peace had been to Austria's interest a fortnight ago, at Langres, it was all the more to her interest now, with the Allies at Paris. . . . I told him that while circumstances to-day might make me seem a suppliant, it did not therefore follow that the Emperor Napoleon's status was that of a vanquished prince. True enough, he had met with reverses; but he was not beaten yet. When Vienna was captured, no one, I told him, had given the Austrian Monarchy up for lost. I added that his Court, of all others, should be the last to welcome disgrace before the world by lending itself to subversive notions. Prince Schwarzenberg's reputation for uprightness was too well known, said I, to permit of his lending his name, or his Ministry's, to treasonable enterprises. Moreover, I told him, he was in honour bound to scotch any such doings —and I hinted at what he would be suspected of, should he fail to do so. I bore down hard upon the disgrace that would be reflected upon him personally, as Commander-in-Chief—the position of his Court being what it was.

The Prince was icy. Not a word, not a sign of interest could I get out of him. His manner, chill and dry, hid neither his embarrassment nor his ill-temper. He informed me that Austria and the Allies were at one in their agreement that the Emperor Napoleon was impossible to deal with—a conclusion which, with its subsequent declaration, had been arrived at unanimously, and only after the ripest thought. . . .[1] The Emperor Francis, he continued, had made up his

[1] Cf. note 1, p. 68.

mind, which nothing could shake. . . . By way of comment he added that, if we had been willing to let ourselves be advised by a father-in-law's affection for a daughter and her husband, we should not have found ourselves reduced to our present extremity.

And then, thawing a little, Prince Schwarzenberg went on to say that Austria had taken infinite pains to secure the Allied consent for an armistice at Lusigny. He told me that I could have no idea what difficulties and what opposition he and Metternich had had to overcome in order to open that way of escape for us. In his view, we would have seen—had we sincerely desired peace—that no negotiations could come to anything until they were removed from the influence of the battlefield. . . . He complained bitterly of the Emperor Napoleon's letter to the Emperor Francis—a letter in which, said he, Napoleon had betrayed all too clearly his mad pretensions; his plan for setting the Allies at loggerheads; his persistence in holding not only to his former notions, but even to his schemes of grandeur.[1] He complained, too, of the Prince of Neuchâtel's letters wherein, after his old habit, the Emperor had sought only to get Austria involved on his side. . . . So far as he personally was concerned, Prince Schwarzenberg told me that he would act as his duty bid him: or in other words, that he would strive to avoid nothing except the suspicion of having put the least hindrance in the way of the Alliance that had set Europe free.

In saying this much, so he told me, he was but stating the Emperor Francis's position—with which M. de Metternich was in agreement. By pressing the issue to its logical conclusion, we had left them no way to interfere. The Emperor Napoleon had too long presumed that, for his daughter's sake, the Hapsburg Emperor would not move against him. But the Hapsburg had had no choice, once his family's interests had been superseded by his people's—and that in turn by the common interest of Europe . . . and so on, and so on. Schwarzenberg closed by saying that Austria had never

[1] Napoleon's letter to the Emperor of Austria, Nogent-sur-Seine, February 21, 1814. Cf. page 7, note 2.

dissembled her position or policy, and had consistently warned us of the peril we were in; but that the Emperor Napoleon had always wilfully blinded himself.

Nothing daunted, I brought the discussion back to the Empress's rights, and the King of Rome's, which, said I, were sacred to our whole people—and more particularly to the army, which would defend those rights as they would the Emperor's. I demanded that the Prince should tell me whether M. de Metternich planned to stay away from Paris and leave it to the mercy of Tartars and Prussians, and whether the Emperor Francis meant to leave his daughter to them without lifting a finger—Marie Louise, whom he had addressed as "Dearest child" in the time of her prosperity. Could Prince Schwarzenberg forget, I asked him, that the Empress was an Austrian Grand Duchess in her own right? He made some vague statement to the effect that perhaps Metternich would be along presently; and beyond that I could not get a word out of him, either about the Emperor or about the Empress's rights.

I warned him, in closing, that peace was what Europe needed. They had stolen a few marches on us, true enough; but the fortunes of war, and the very law of probability itself, were bound to work against them when they had to patrol so great a city as Paris, which was capable of rising against them on two days' notice. What motive could they have, I asked him, for refusing to make peace? Was not this their chance to recover their self-respect, by dating the peace from within our very capital?

His answer was that my contention might very well be sound, so far as the force of arms went. But granting that they were beaten, or perhaps even forced from France: what then? Their resolution would remain unchanged; for it was now universally resolved that there could be no lasting peace so long as a shred of power remained to the Emperor Napoleon.

CHAPTER III

Caulaincourt in Paris

IT was plain to be seen what bias would be given to opinion in the capital. I returned thither full of sad forebodings—and that, too, despite the fact that I had long anticipated this evil day. It need hardly be said that I was still resolved to ride out the storm, to fight for the Emperor till the last, and if the father were beyond my help, to save his crown for the King of Rome.

When I had reached Paris, my first care was to discover what leading citizens still were there—what chiefs of the Senate had not already fled. I went straight to the Prefecture of Police to hear the latest news, and to learn from Pasquier what plans had been made for receiving the Allies and for maintaining public order; for I did not know what the Emperor's instructions had been, or the circumstances that had attended the Empress's departure, or what had happened thereafter.

The Prefect of the Seine was nowhere to be found. Pasquier, however, told me all the fresh information that he had. Everything needful had been done, he said, to ensure civil order: the National Guard had been stationed at all strategic points. His committee, he told me, could find nothing but praise for the Tsar Alexander—even though he had come out so strongly against the Emperor, and had gone so far as to say that the Sovereign Rulers would have no dealings with him or any of his family.

By way of persuading the Prefect to do his best to keep order, I showed him my credentials from the Emperor; and I told him frankly that, since my present status was no better than a truce-bearer's, there was nothing that I could do in the public way. However, said I, I should be seeing the Tsar immediately upon his arrival; and I added that as went Paris, so went our future. Pasquier's reception of my advances was

noticeably stiff; but I could see from his readiness to explain himself to me, and from eagerness to account for everything, that his foresight and loyalty had been greater than could reasonably have been expected. All of the district officers and secret agents, whom he summoned before me by way of verifying the steps that had been taken to keep order and check rioters, gave the most reassuring reports. Nothing had been overlooked. Pasquier told me that he had left no stone unturned since Savary's departure,[1] so that not an important document remained that might embarrass the Government or any individual. Therefore, said he, I could assure the Emperor that he had done everything required by his sense of duty, foresight, and delicacy. From him I learned that the Prince of Benevento and the Duke of Piacenza, who had not set out to join the Empress until seven o'clock that morning,[2] had been held up at the city gate—whereupon they had returned home. I then foresaw that Talleyrand would be the rallying-point for every special interest and every passion of the moment.

To the Prince of Benevento's, accordingly, I hurried in search of information. My hopes and fears must all depend on him, as I well knew; for everybody else had quitted Paris after the Empress's departure. (The lesser figures who remained there were lying low, and would have been useless to me in any case). It was vital, too, for me to learn what instructions the Emperor had given to the Regents, what the tenor of their deliberations had been, and what dispositions

[1] Savary had left Paris at 4 p.m., March 30, in the direction of Orléans.

[2] We know of the farce enacted by Talleyrand—though the date was the evening of March 30, and not the day following, as Caulaincourt supposes. After having attempted to make Savary, Pasquier, or Chabrol issue an order forbidding him to leave Paris, Talleyrand set out at 7 p.m. At the Conférence barrier, Rémusat, who was in command of the sentry-post, ordered him to return home. After a great show of respect for the squad of National Guardsmen, Talleyrand made his way back. As for Lebrun, he was then seventy-five years of age, and had not tried to leave the city.

the Council had made upon leaving Paris. I knew nothing of these preliminary matters, which the Emperor had not so much as mentioned to me. The sounding-out of M. de Talleyrand's projects was no slight task. I had no doubt, though, but that the strength of our former association would bring him to tell me outright whether we were friends or foes. He seemed astonished at the sight of me.

"The Emperor has ruined us all," he began, "by not letting you make peace at Châtillon."

"Can he count on you in our misfortune?" I asked.

"You will find," he answered, "that two days ago I took every possible measure to preserve his throne—to keep the Empress and his son here. But the Emperor issues secret orders that put a spoke in every wheel. He gives his full confidence to nobody. His letter to his brother wrecked everything:[1] our whole procedure was brought to nothing by the dread of displeasing him. Thus he destroyed his credit, and lost France. We are none of us obliged to help him any more. Why has he let things come to their present pass? What did the Emperor mean by taking advice from Maret and his fellow-sycophants, instead of from men who cared for his glory and for the fame of France?"

"This is no time to argue about His Majesty's shortcomings," I replied; "he has accredited me to the Tsar Alexander to stand up for his rights, and to set my name to the peace which the whole world desires. Are you with me now, in our time of need? Do you mean to say that you can contemplate sacrificing the Empress—the King of Rome—the dearest interests of France?"

"At the last meeting of the Council," said he, "I did everything that could be done to protect them, and to prevent their leaving the city. I don't care how badly the Emperor has

[1] At the meeting of the Regency Council on March 28 (at which time the Empress's departure was decided), it had been voted twice over that there was no reason for the Government to leave the capital. Joseph then produced Napoleon's letter of March 16 (*Correspondance de Napoléon*, 21497), decreeing that it should depart, "If the enemy moves against Paris in such force as to preclude all resistance."

treated me: I've been about the last to stand up for him and his—and what good has it done me, with the Emperor giving orders behind my back? He has even presumed to betray the Council of Regency. When you find that out, you will see that I did everything I could."

Our talk was interrupted by word that Count Tolstoi, Grand Marshal of the Russian Court, had come to say that it was the Tsar's pleasure to lodge with Prince Talleyrand.[1] A moment later and there was M. de Nesselrode, asking for the Prince of Benevento's private ear. Tolstoi withdrew; Talleyrand went on talking in the farthest corner of the room: and such of his remarks as I was meant to overhear left me no doubt but that I had outstayed my welcome. That was all I needed to know; and I left, satisfied that Talleyrand and I no longer spoke the same language. I found his ante-rooms already full of gentry who had come, no doubt, to echo his statements and to take their tone from him. In order not to bring the blush to their cheeks, I pretended not to notice them. My next concern was to go and change, so that I might wait upon the Tsar as soon as he arrived. I went to stay with my sister, Mme de Saint-Aignan, to be less in the public eye.

Meanwhile the invaders entered Paris,[2] where the most dismal hush prevailed. Every face was the picture of uncertainty and fear. . . . I sent to various persons who should

[1] The Tsar of Russia's decision to lodge at Talleyrand's (at the corner of the Rue de Rivoli and the Rue Saint-Florentin) was not made until the march through Paris was in progress. He then received an anonymous letter warning him that the Elysée, where at first he was supposed to go, was mined. It plainly was not. One cannot be sure, however, that the letter was not written in Talleyrand's study. See Nesselrode, *Lettres et papiers*, II, 115, and Charles Dupuy, *Le Ministère de Talleyrand en* 1814, I, 149.

[2] The head of the procession reached the Pantin barrier at 11 a.m. The main column, which included the Russian Guards, passed along the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Martin, through the Porte Saint-Martin, and so by the boulevards and the Rue Royale to the Champs-Elysées where, after the march-past before the Allied Sovereigns, ranks were broken. It was then past five o'clock.

have been able to inform me of what was being done and said . . . but I could learn nothing until late, after nightfall. Anybody who might have had the least insight into affairs had left Paris; and everybody else was out in the streets, whether through curiosity or restlessness. During that early phase, all wished to be thought not at home—or preferably, out of town.

It took the Allies some hours to file in. As I had expected, they were in the best possible order—and everyone was impressed by the white scarves that adorned their left arms. The Parisians were misled by that emblem, which was taken as a signal to bring out the white cockade. A score of youthful sparks took advantage of that impression and came out with white cockades and rosettes. Once past the Boulevard des Italiens, they even started shouting "*Vive le Roy!*" The first to do so got themselves arrested by the National Guard. But the impression conveyed by the Allied emblem was so great that they were turned loose again, lest an incident be created; and the rest of them were allowed to carry on, taking some women and children with them. At that time—at such a moment—there were Frenchmen shameless enough to deck themselves out with the colours of enemies from the Steppes: the air resounded, even, with their cheers for the invaders who, in that day of mourning and disgrace, set a profaning foot within the Capital of the Brave. That small group stirred no real sensation among the populace; their shouts elicited more murmuring than applause; yet certain of them crowded about the Allied Sovereigns, shouting "*Vive le Roy!*" and demanding that they restore the Bourbons. However, they found Their Majesties as impassive as the bulk of the population appeared uninterested—or perhaps offended by those shouts, which in any case rang no louder than the shouting of: "Hurrah for the Sovereigns! Hurrah for the Allies! Hurrah for our liberators!" with which they interspersed them. As for the Sovereigns, they neither encouraged nor repulsed those demands. Once within the gates, they looked with vague benevolence upon all that lay in their path; and they answered those orators by saying that they meant to dictate nothing to

France. They repeated to all who drew near them: "We bring you peace. We are ready to listen to anything that may be for the country's good: we enter Paris only as friends."

All that then took place was only too well calculated, alas, for the fixing of their attention. Intrigue and treason, which had already prepared the ground for their success, now made use of the effect produced by the ill-starred white armlet and this popular uprising, if one may call it such. There were those who were ready to see to it that this voice crying in the wilderness was accepted as an outburst of public opinion and the general will. The enemy had found woe everywhere, as far as the Boulevard des Italiens . . .; but from there on, as far as the Place de la Revolution, Paris had shown them a different face: one might have said another people: as in reality, indeed, it was. . . . In that moment of stupor and shock, the Swedish armlet had done something which the Coalition could not have foreseen—and something, too, which traitors and schemers would not have dared to hope for under any other circumstances, and without some hundred and fifty thousand foreign bayonets in control and deliberately adorned, so it seemed, with symbols of the Restoration.

The admirable order that was maintained astounded everyone, and predisposed everyone in favour of the victorious Allies. Not one of their men broke ranks; the Sovereigns greeted the populace with an impartial air; everything tended to hearten the public. . . . Their orderlies were as polite as could be, in their passage to and fro through the crowds; and they spoke nothing but French as they went. That in itself was enough to reassure a populace that was by nature headstrong, emotional, avid of sheer sensation—and too concerned with the moment's perils to spare a thought for what might come. To these circumstances may be attributed some measure, at least, of the welcome accorded the Sovereigns after they had passed the Boulevard des Italiens—to these, and to the fact that certain interested persons, keeping step with the head of the enemy's columns, had kept proclaiming the word—which spread—that there had not been the least disturbance since the city gates had been passed. In support of what

the Prefects had announced, they added that the Sovereigns professed to enter the city for the sake of friendship alone; that they would exact no indemnity.

All heads—and hearts—were turned by this abrupt release from doubt and fear. Security, repose, the right to pursue the daily round—all this had lain outside their expectations. The majority of citizens had supposed they would be plundered, or would have to submit to molestation and licentiousness at the very least. Fathers feared for their homes, mothers for their children. But where were the half-savage men whom they had expected to see? The people were struck, instead, by the good order that was kept, and by the fine appearance of the troops that went filing by, equipped like our own. Their bands were playing French military airs; the Sovereigns looked prepossessing and friendly: therefore everyone was disposed to thank them for not doing any harm. Your Parisian is by nature inquisitive—a born chatter-box. Numbers of them followed along beside the first corps that marched in; and as they went, they told all and sundry not to be afraid. There were, alas, citizens enough in this mighty city who viewed that spectacle of shame and sorrow as but one novelty the more.

You may infer what sad thoughts weighed me down, compelled as I was to sit at home and wait until Their Majesties had taken up their respective lodgings. But for full details of that day, in which the Sovereigns and outsiders of every sort were given all too fair a chance to observe how fickle the national character is, and what ingrates many of us are—the telling of those full details, I say, must be left to the participants in that day's doings. . . . The bringing-out of the white cockade was the work of twenty-five or thirty young sprigs, all frankly Royalist in sympathy. In stating their number, I exaggerate rather than not. For backing, they had a few malcontents whose greed, misfeasance, or what you will, had led the Government to get on without them—and who, in consequence, had gone over to its enemies. They availed themselves of that chance to regain office; and there were some women who joined up with them.

Such then was the minority which, by supporting the intrigues of a few men higher up, guided the Sovereigns in deciding the fate of France. The Allied Rulers took advantage of this trend because their personal spite—and peace within their respective cabinets—was fostered by everything that tended towards the Emperor Napoleon's overthrow. In their view it seemed that any faction, no matter what, was a lever which they must bear down on—a prop too good for them to neglect, once matters had been brought to their present pass. . . . At that, though, it was the sad lot of the avenging and sovereign invaders, that, in taking quick advantage of plots favourable to their ruling passions and their vengeful spirit, they had to make use of the Imperial Government's most servile flatterers and fuglemen; of persons whose whole concern to-day was to have it thought that never, never had they been anything but the most loyal, the most devoted, servants of Louis XVIII . . .

When the hours had passed which the troops took to file in, the Tsar repaired to his quarters at the Prince of Benevento's: I was there. His Majesty was in conference with Talleyrand and sundry others.[1] After a long wait, the Tsar sent word for me to come back at 10 p.m., at which time he assured me again of what he had said in the morning. Our conversation covered the same ground, with the Tsar adding nothing except that the temper of Paris, so it seemed to him, was strongly hostile to the Emperor Napoleon. I explained to him that the day's events had resulted from the sight of the Allied emblem and the inference drawn from it. I laboured the point that this inference of the Allied intentions had led to the fear that they would be offended if the cheers of the few were stopped. There had been some arrests, as everyone had

[1] Directly after his arrival, Alexander was closeted with Talleyrand. Then an important conference was held in the large salon on the first floor. The members were the Tsar, the King of Prussia, Schwarzenberg, Prince Liechtenstein, Nesselrode, Pozzo di Borgo, Talleyrand, and Dalberg; and de Pradt and Baron Louis were called in. The meeting resulted in a declaration, dated April 1 and signed by Alexander, stating that the Allies would have no further dealings with Napoleon or any member of his family.

seen, and as His Majesty might admit. I told him that he could have gauged the country's true feelings by the quiet composure of the majority—by the general attitude until after the Boulevard des Italiens had been reached. I asked him to note that even then there had been more shouts of: "Hurrah for the Sovereigns! Hurrah for peace! Hurrah for Tsar Alexander!" than of: "*Vive le Roy!*" And there was his proof that these demonstrations, which they wished to regard as significant, were an expression, rather, of the general will to peace, and of gratitude to him for his showing that he brought peace and not the sword. The good order that had prevailed, the discipline of the troops, and the charm of his own manner had won him every heart, said I . . .; and every sensible and observant man would understand that the clamour which had been set up could mean no more than this: "I'm not afraid any more: thanks for not hurting me, when you could have done so." Nothing had been heard of this until the army had crossed the better part of Paris—until there had been time, in short, for good discipline to work its reassurance. By way of comment, I added that I had heard far louder cheering at Berlin; that the people was everywhere the same: loud-mouthed, heedless, avid of new sensations. In deciding a question so important as this, he surely could not allow his opinion to be dictated by the shouts of some feather-brained young men or a few disgruntled oldsters of no reputation.

I agreed that there was general dissatisfaction because the Emperor Napoleon had pushed matters to such a point that to-day there could be foreign armies in Paris. But it did not therefore follow that one wished a change of government—let alone, that it was to the interest of the Sovereigns to ferment a revolution. Between those who shouted so loudly to-day and those who held their tongues, there was, so I pointed out to the Tsar, this difference: the malcontents unquestionably had burned their measure of incense before the Strong Man in his happier days, while it was certain that the others had shown him either opposition or disapproval—wherefore it was the latter sort alone who had any right to complain. I added that two months ago many of these

apostles of change had been begging for the honour and privilege of taking the field beside the idol whom now they wished to throw down. Leaving Napoleon's interests out of it altogether, surely the Allied Rulers could not foster the fantastic notion of dethroning a dynasty because it had not governed to suit one's desire, or because it had blundered. The kings of Europe could not forget, any more than France could, that the Emperor Napoleon had saved kingship and sovereign power from bankruptcy; that Europe had him to thank for the restoration of social order, and of every tottering throne. . . .

I went on to remind the Tsar of how, on many a different score, he had often praised this Emperor whom he was censuring now in certain of his aspects. Great men, I told him, have the defects of their qualities, just like everybody else. Napoleon had shown himself the generous conqueror at Vienna. Of all the monarchs he had warred with, it was of course the Tsar Alexander who had most grounds for complaining of him; wherefore it was the Tsar's duty, in this instance, to be his most generous enemy, to rise superior to every grudge, and to triumph over all the trifling passions which one would like to give rein to. The Tsar Alexander was bound, so I told him, to take heed only of the true interest of a fine, far-sighted course of political action, the prime requisites of which were stable institutions and firm management. Therefore His Majesty would veto a change of any sort, and would recognize that M. de Fontanes had uttered a great political truth in saying that the Emperor Napoleon had dethroned nothing but Anarchy—a statement whose truth had been attested, moreover, by the recognition and the alliance of the whole Continent. Europe needed a rest; the general mood called for repose: and those two ends required that one should not overthrow the man who had chained up the Revolution.

I mentioned the army to him, and its fine morale, and the spirit it had shown wherever it had been engaged, although it was always outnumbered. The Tsar agreed, and even sang its praises. So then I spoke to him anew of the army's devo-

tion to the Emperor, and of the means that lay to our hand for manoeuvring upon the Allied rear and attacking them in Paris itself. . . . I spoke, too, of the influence that was exercised over the country's opinion by a truly national army such as ours, drawn from every rank of society. . . . Wherefore, I suggested, though peace was assured to-day, to-morrow the chance might be lost through the unwillingness of the Allies to seize it. In short, I told him, it was none of his business to sacrifice the lives of gallant Russian officers and men to the triumph of Talleyrand and the Bourbons—whom I knew his real opinion of, from his frankness with me in the past. In discussing this matter, I found it easy to speak without the prejudice of personal interest or sentiment; for in this instance I was standing up for the Emperor not only because that was my duty, but also because I was convinced that the welfare of France, and of all Europe as well, obliged me to do so. Monarchs and dynasties, I reminded the Tsar, were interdependent; and therefore in defending the Emperor Napoleon, the King of Rome, and the Empress, who were members of this great House of Kings, I was protecting the rights of them all.

I begged His Majesty to weigh the consequences of prolonging the war—the risks of battle, the peril of driving brave men to desperation. For his own sake, I asked him, would he not postpone his resolution until he had had time to learn the unbiased opinion and wish of the French people? —until he had listened to and consulted some men whose position enabled them to speak dispassionately in the people's name . . .?

The Tsar Alexander listened to me with marked willingness and interest—I may say, with extraordinary kindliness. He discussed many questions as though they had been purely academic and admitted that many of my points were well taken. He told me time and again how impartial he was—repeating, meanwhile, what he had told me earlier in the day: that the Sovereigns, whose last thought it was to put any pressure whatsoever upon France, wished only to discover her true feelings. So synonymous, said he, was the

peace of Europe with the acquiescence of France, that Their Majesties could think of nothing except how to comply with her wishes. Neither the views nor the desires of any faction would be taken into account, so he said. No serious consideration would be given to anything except the express views of persons without bias, and to plenary conferences of State which could not fail to know what was best for France. He was bound, he said, to warn me that any further persistence in safeguarding the Emperor's tenure could lead only to the demand for still greater guarantees of safety on Europe's part. In view of Napoleon's lust for battle and power, what else could the Sovereign Rulers do? Their peoples' interests could be their only guide—seeing how things stood.

My remark was that Their Majesties, be they ever so friendly and fair-spoken, were sadly misled if they thought us *hors de combat*. Habituated as we were to bivouacking in foreign capitals, we could readily support the occupation of our own. If the Allies held out too long, said I, they might perhaps change places with the Emperor and find that the lot of battle had given us the upper hand.

In an effort to dismiss me, the Tsar repeated what he had said that morning: that he could countenance me in Paris only as a truce-bearer. Already—and reasonably, too—he had been asked to send me packing. However, since he knew me for a man of my word, he had persuaded Prince Schwarzenberg to parole me. It was, therefore, my bounden duty to abstain from politics, and from everything else that had no bearing upon my errand to Their Majesties.

At length this antagonism to Napoleon compelled me to revert to his dynastic rights, and to protest that any proposal for dishonouring us would leave us no choice but to win or die. Many a brave fellow, I told the Tsar, would be only too glad to join our ranks and share our lot . . . whereupon His Majesty exclaimed that they had no thought of driving us to any such extreme. He told me time and again that he and his compeers were at one with the will of France and could think of nothing but what might be best for her.

In his whole discourse, I asked him, what provision was

there for the Regency or for the King of Rome? Here was something for him to think about—a straw for him to hold out to me—so as to allay the army's irritation and keep us from pushing things to their ultimate issue. (His suppressions, which I could not help noting, struck me as a bad sign and added inevitably to my uneasiness.)

The Tsar Alexander was content to fall back upon the argument that nobody wished to dictate to us—that France's will would be decisive; and he spoke no more of the Emperor.

"But whose will is meant by this?" I asked him. "Thus far, so I see, it is the Prince of Benevento's will, and his intrigues, that are given the upper hand."

"And if the nation should prove like-minded?"

"France, however, is not in Paris—nor are the desires of Paris represented by opinion in the anterooms of this house," I added, alluding to our presence at Talleyrand's.

We talked on at great length. I spoke heatedly, and often was influenced by the deep sorrow I felt, and by my indignation against those gentry who, in violation of their every oath, were willing even to sacrifice France to their own vengefulness. Several times I thought the Tsar seemed moved. He appeared also to appreciate my motives, and he took no offence at any of my remarks. He treated me with his old kindliness, and spoke to me of my residence at Petersburg, of former days, and of the misfortunes that had since befallen, to which he added a few words about what he had done to avert those calamities. Whenever he mentioned the Emperor Napoleon, he did so in the best of taste; but whatever he said was irrelevant to the matter then on my mind. This kindness was merely a polite evasion. At length, in dismissing me, he said he would see me on the morrow; that this had been too full a day to permit of his reaching a final agreement with his allies. He added that he wished, moreover, to see and talk with the French authorities and the personages whose opinion he was anxious to have by way of making up his mind.

I had approached a number of Senators, who dared neither to receive nor call on me. However, I so contrived it that

the next morning [April 1] I ran across several of them, members of the Opposition in particular, but men whose sense of honour I liked to believe in. I found them all dead set against the Emperor. At heart, some of them were inclined to favour the Regency; but so blind were they that they had lost their heads through fear of the Emperor's return—and still more, through hope of standing high in the new government. Craven office-holders! . . . They were already smirking at the sunrise, forgetful of their glory and the blood they had shed for their country! They let everything go by the board, and fooled themselves into thinking it no treason to betray France in the day of peril—to abandon their benefactor in the time of his misfortune—and the Imperial Dynasty which they had sworn to protect. Their reserve showed me that there was nothing to be hoped for from them, and that one could obtain from their compliance whatever was in accord with their dull ambition.

Since the twenty-eighth, so I learned, the Senators had formed into juntos. On the twenty-ninth they had held a meeting at a member's house, and had even agreed that they would convene next day at the Luxemburg, despite the fact that the President, the bureau-chiefs, and the Senate officials—who alone could call meetings and legalize them—had all departed with the Empress. I learned, too, that since yesterday the Prince of Benevento had been in conference with certain members, so as to sound their views. This fact showed me how pressing the danger was. I resolved to double my exertions; to spend all my energy in the attempt to make the idea of a Regency triumph at this juncture, if meanwhile there should be no military developments to sway the balance in the Emperor's favour. Alas! all my efforts went for nothing. Talleyrand's *démarches*; the Allied occupation; the Tsar's repeated expressions of goodwill, which were passed about and interpreted as favourable to a change of government: all this had turned every Senator's head. Those Elder Statesmen were hypnotized. They felt no fear of disgracing or compromising themselves; far from it. They rushed into action like men in a daze—fearful, seemingly, lest they should

neglect to do too much, or should leave a single bridge unburned behind them. Their infatuation or their terror (for doubtless there was some of both) partook of madness. The desertion of the Ministers, plus the loudly proclaimed views of Their Majesties, plus Talleyrand's political activity amongst the influential Parisians —the sum-total of this could leave me in no doubt as to the stand which that splendid branch of Government would be made to take.

I made vain overtures to still more Senators; and vainly I repeated or suggested how vital it was for them that they should keep the Regency at least, if they were unwilling to stand up for the Emperor. Without avail I pointed out to them that only a little vigour was needed; that the army could win out; that one or two energetic Senators would give some of them pause, and could sweep the feeble majority off its feet. In vain did I try to make them understand that this course, demanded by their honour, was in keeping with their true interest: I could not so much as get an inkling of their opinions or projects—if they had any. They were afraid of running counter to the ringleaders' plans, and of not seeming sufficiently supple and willing. The least ill-disposed of them made such feeble protestations of loyalty to their oath that one could readily see they were merely evasive. The whole lot of them was ready and eager to follow treasonable suggestions and take orders from the enemy. Before all else, they meant to stay in office. They had already been carried away by the suggestion that they were going to make a figure; that they would be called in to draft a constitution which would be forced upon the Bourbons, and which would consequently safeguard the country's rights, the lives of everybody—and themselves. Not a man of them but saw himself as a latter-day General Monk. The reports that came to me on such of them as I had not seen now made it plain how supinely the greater number would vote as the vice-Grand Elector told them to. Posterity will never believe that not a single bold voice was lifted to put those Senators in mind of their oath.

Whilst the *Sénat conservateur* was destroying that which

it held title only to defend,[1] sedition ran with equal speed through the City Council; and a mob of two hundred, that had been gathered since yesterday by the Bourbon agitators, made a vain attempt to pull down the Emperor's statue from the triumphal column in the Place Vendôme.[2] They wasted their labour on this for some hours, and even hooked up a whole herd of horses to it; but the statue withstood the efforts of that foolish undertaking. Far from approving of such vandalism, the populace, down to the lowest of the low, jeered below their breath at the futility of that anti-French attempt to make the Great Man fall at the feet of our enemies. When that movement and its attendant undertaking did not catch on with the people and had been made to look silly by failure, the Police called in its hired performers; and foreign patrols dispersed the curious. Artisans were given the job of taking down that statue which, so it was assumed but yesterday, would surely defy the ages from the top of the immortal Austerlitz Column.[3] In all fairness to the invaders, it must be said that this gesture, though it was designed to flatter the triumphant Cossacks, was far from meeting with their approval. It succeeded, rather, in earning

[1] At three-thirty on April 1, seventy-four Senators (or four more than half of that body, of whom ninety were then in Paris), approved the list of the Provisional Government as made out the preceding day at Talleyrand's. The list included Talleyrand himself, the Duke of Dalberg, Jaucourt, the Abbé de Montesquiou, and General Beurnonville.

[2] On March 31, Viscount Sosthènes de la Rochefoucauld, the Marquis de Montbreuil, and a few other Royalists went to the Place Vendôme. Labourers under their direction forced the doors of the column, climbed to the top of it, and tried to hammer loose the bolts of the statue, whilst others hauled from below on ropes that had been passed around the neck and torso. The figure leant slightly, and the statuette of Victory fell to the ground from the Emperor's hand. A battalion of Semenov's regiment cleared the Place Vendôme soon afterwards, and bivouacked there. Cf. H. Houssaye, 1814, 562.

[3] The statue was not taken down until April 8, but the Provisional Government had it veiled in pack-cloth on April 2. Cf. *Journal d'un détenu*, in A. Pichot, *Napoléon à l'île d'Elbe*, 448.

the contempt and scorn of certain high-minded Russian officers, who glanced pityingly upon what was taking place. As for the sensation-mongering French majority, what choice had they but to hold their tongues? How were they to know that this agitation, as instituted by the Provisional Government, had not the least authority, hidden or overt, to bless itself with? None, I venture to say, could help but shiver at the prospect of Frenchmen assailing the chief monument to our national glory whilst every armed force in Europe stood by—troops that had been routed time and again by the man whose mere image seemed to defy them still.

I went to call on Prince Schwarzenberg—he was spoken of as the Generalissimo—to determine what his present humour was, and to see if perhaps the pleasant memories which Paris must have revived in him had not disposed him more favourably towards us. In my position, it was vital for me to find out whether the Emperor of Austria or M. de Metternich would be at hand; for their prolonged absence could leave me no doubts as to the subversive plans which apparently had been decided on. Under such trying circumstances one hopes against hope. The mind, alert lest anything escape it, pays such heed to what is passing that the heart sinks and sinks again—and for want of certainty one clutches at mere signs in an effort to surmise their bearing. Hopelessness confronted me in all that I saw or sensed, and at the end of my every thought or observation.

Only after long insistence was I admitted to the Generalissimo, who was plainly astonished to see me still in Paris. I begged him without avail to write and inform his Sovereign of the step I had taken yesterday, and of the proposals I was empowered to make. In vain I offered him a passport so that his courier might cross our lines and arrive more quickly. He was cold and taciturn, but chiefly he was embarrassed; and he would hear of nothing. He told me point-blank how remarkable it was that I should still be in Paris. His natural outspokenness led him to drop a few words which left me no room for doubt; it was clear that I was being allowed to remain against his advice, and that the Prince of Benevento

and sundry others who wished to control matters had already forestalled me with their strong insistence that I be sent away. He ended by telling me that I ought to thank my reputation as a man of honour—but especially, that I ought to thank the Tsar—for the fact that I was not under surveillance. As one soldier to another, he said, he was warning me to be on my guard—and to plan my departure, too, since I could stay no longer.

I answered him by saying that I had to see the Tsar of Russia again, and by expressing surprise that that monarch should have shown himself more receptive to my cause than had the spokesman of my Emperor's father-in-law. And I went on to point out to him, though to no end, that the crushing of Napoleon could not serve Austria's interests; on the contrary; that she would best serve herself by taking advantage of our sincere wish to make peace, whereby she could avoid the risk of a battle, et cetera. . . . Moreover, I told him, he knew his France too well not to understand that her people, down even to the Parisians whom sedition was seeking to stampede, wished no change of government—let alone the Bourbons. It was to Europe's interest to repulse every sort of revolution—and to safeguard the Emperor in particular, who had suppressed our own.

"What," I asked him, "will you gain by prolonging the war, now that you have reached your objective? Will you make a hundred thousand Austrians lose their lives for the sake of putting Bourbons on the throne of your Emperor's daughter and son-in-law?"

"Our objective," he answered sharply, "is to make sure that our children have years of peace, and that the world has rest. The Emperor Napoleon has shown all too clearly, of late, that he wishes neither of those things. With him, there is no security for Europe."

Somebody handed him a batch of reports, thus interrupting our conversation; nor was I able to resume it. I could see that he was only too glad of this excuse for breaking off, and for getting away from me and my discourse by pleading the pressure of affairs. His bearing, speech, and everything about him

proved to me that Prince Schwarzenberg was a man who dreaded lest he compromise himself by talking with me—if indeed he had not already done so by allowing me to pass his door.

There had been time enough for the Tsar Alexander to confer with the King of Prussia, the Generalissimo, and the British Ambassador. There had been frequent conferences at Talleyrand's and at the Tsar's. Generals Dessolle and Beurnonville, the Duke of Dalberg, and M. de Pradt had been present; and Talleyrand had sent for M. de Montesquiou, the Bourbons' notorious spy, to sit in with them. (Their chief agents were M. de Bourrienne, whom the Emperor had dismissed from his Cabinet for peculation, and M. de Laborie, whom His Majesty held responsible for several intrigues in politics, and for a famous scandal as well.) Talleyrand insisted that the Bourbons be recalled. This proposal found the Allied Sovereigns undecided, despite their unanimous resolve not to deal with the Emperor. They were anxious to be even with the man who, down to that very moment, had made them trouble; but they were more eager still to get out of the whole business—to find some scheme which should neither offend the French army nor rouse the nation as a whole—to bring the war to an end, in short, by running no further risk of a combat. They still thought it worth while not to offend France, since they knew that at heart the nation was satisfied with its present government. Such then were the motives which held Their Majesties in suspense. . . .

The British rallied all their forces in support of Talleyrand. The Tsar, though never so disposed towards the faction that best favoured Prussia's grudges and his own, was restrained, engrossed, and otherwise held back by wider considerations, namely: the army's proximity, French sentiment as he conceived of it, the fresh factors that had been injected by the Revolution and the Imperial Government, everybody's readiness for a truce on the spot—and a very real desire to see affairs so ordered that henceforth the peace of Europe would be assured. The King of Prussia was of one mind with him; wherefore the Tsar Alexander advertised for still brighter luminaries to rally round, and for further accessions of opinion.

This led Talleyrand to bear down upon the City Council and the Senate: agitation and intrigue were everywhere. M. de Bourrienne took charge of the mails, and M. de Laborie of administration. Every stop was pulled out, every pedal pushed down, in support of the Prince of Benevento's faction. There could be no question of the necessity for playing upon the Tsar Alexander. Was it not true, forsooth, that His Majesty—no matter how predisposed to fall in with their partisan schemes—was at heart a well-meaning man who needed some salve for his conscience before he could speak his mind? And here it was that the reactionaries were strongly and ably seconded by Pozzo di Borgo, a man hot in the Bourbon cause; a British agent this long time, and later in the pay of Russia. By the latter country he was acknowledged or not, as circumstances might dictate, wherefore he was not so much as allowed to wear the Russian uniform at Vienna, where he was in their employ during my time at Petersburg. One may judge of his spiteful industry against the Emperor Napoleon, who was his personal enemy, and a fellow-Corsican —and who had so persecuted him abroad that his very livelihood was interfered with.

As for Prince Schwarzenberg, we have seen how forthright he was. The frankest of the lot, he was devoid of all pretence. The rest of the ministers took their cue from their masters. With the exception of the British representative[1]—who followed along passively, though there could be no doubt as to his position—they sought only for some means of identifying their respective grudges with the scheme of political action that was demanded by the circumstances in which they found themselves.

The Prince of Benevento was only too skilful; he understood Paris all too well, and the men with whom he had to deal. Thanks to the years past, his grasp of the political means was too firm to prevent his making use of it, or to leave him in any doubt of success. His opportunity to gauge

[1] Sir Charles William Stewart (1778–1854) was Lord Castlereagh's brother. Before his transfer to the Allied General Headquarters, he had been British Minister at Berlin.

the price of every personage then left in Paris had been far too ample for him not to feel sure of his ability to bring them before the footlights one by one, as he might see fit. Every man-jack of them was his through interest, spite, or, in the case of those who were least ill-disposed, because of the general unrest that had come of the Emperor's rash and dogged refusal to make peace. Count Jaucourt, King Joseph's friend and earliest chamberlain, who was a member of the Senate,[1] was the first to be shoved forward by Talleyrand as an example of a Bonapartist whom reason and the course of events had brought back to a different way of thinking. Their Majesties were deeply impressed by the force of his opinion, sustained as it was by the prestige of his prior behaviour, the esteem which he inspired, and the bonds of sentiment and interest which joined him to the Emperor's family. He was sacrificing his personal interests—so they said—and his known attachments, to further a necessary change. And M. Lanjuinais,[2] that upright, honest, and brave man whose sense of judgement often is betrayed by the kindness of his heart, was also brought into play along with Lambrechts[3] the intriguer, and with sundry others of less note.

Those personal means were not the least powerful of the devices that were used to influence the Tsar Alexander's mind —those individual opinions, that is to say, of men who were

[1] Arnaud-François, Marquis de Jaucourt (1757–1852): Legislative Deputy, then Member of the Tribune, then Senator. He had served as Joseph's chamberlain, and had gone to Naples with him. He had parted with Napoleon when, in 1810, he saw General Ferino promoted over his head to the Florentine senatorship. Jaucourt served as Foreign Minister pro tem, while Talleyrand was at the Congress of Vienna; and under the Second Restoration he was Secretary of the Navy.

[2] Jean-Denis, Count Lanjuinais, formerly a member of the Convention.

[3] Charles-Joseph-Mathieu, Count Lambrechts (1753–1823), a Belgian by birth: Minister of Justice in the year VI, and Senator the 3rd Nivôse of the year VIII; he had voted against the Consulate for Life, and the establishing of the Empire. On April 2, 1814, he proposed that the Senate should vote that Napoleon had forfeited the crown.

held in general respect, and whom the Tsar regarded as impartial and as acting solely for the public good. Theirs were the views that most strongly impressed him, and by which his course was decided. For that Prince's fair-mindedness allowed me every opportunity for opposing whatever came at first hand from Talleyrand's interested faction. Pleas and suggestions which smacked of their coming from that quarter struck the Tsar as suspect in advance. (When he has had time to think, his tact is too fine and his sensibilities are too delicate to permit of his countenancing an intrigue.) In all his discourse—at every moment, and in spite of himself—he betrayed his contempt for that faction and his respect for those individuals, though he were never so favourable to their complots, whereby he thought to advance the Great European Cause. That was the phrase which filled every mouth by way of justification, doubtless, for the hatred and dread which, far more than political wisdom, was shaping the course of things to come.

When, by his permission, I went to see the Tsar on the morning of April 1, he repeated in brief what he had told me the day before. He said he would see me the next day, or even that night if I had anything to discuss with him; that in any case I should have a reply, and that I ought to hold myself in readiness to leave immediately thereafter. He added kindly that it always gave him pleasure to see me, but that they were worrying him to send me away. Many, he said, were disturbed by my presence, which lent colour to the view that peace with Napoleon was a possibility; wherefore a number of persons were kept from speaking their minds.[1] I laid stress

[1] "The Provisional Government frowned on Caulaincourt's presence at Paris. Without really helping Napoleon's cause, his presence tended to prolong the uncertainty of various timid persons; and it was the Abbé de Pradt, as I recall it, who took the responsibility of speaking to that effect. . . . The Abbé de Pradt told Alexander that, regardless of how one meant to act, there would be no open expression of opinion so long as one's personal feelings wanted reassurance—moreover, that Caulaincourt's presence at Paris gave everybody the chills." Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, X, 56. (And cf. Rovigo, *Mémoires*, IV, 425; and de Pradt, *Récit*, 72.)

once more upon every consideration by which he ought to be induced both to make peace and to sanction no change of government whereby Europe would be thrown into fresh confusion in order to gratify the spite of a few factious persons. I emphasized . . . the risks to which the military position of the Allies could lay them open; the reinforcements with which our corps in the Midi and our many garrison towns could furnish us; the hostility to the Bourbons which one would find in the army and the departments of France alike; and the fact that the Allied troops, no matter how well-disciplined, would prove so galling that presently they would send into our camp those very sections of the populace which to-day one chose to think opposed to us. I strove to convince the Tsar that even though I was the Emperor Napoleon's plenipotentiary, I was speaking only as a good Frenchman; as a man whose advocacy of peace had long been known, and who was devoted to the true interests of France before all else. At my age, I told him, since I had scarcely known the Bourbons, I felt neither animus nor personal estrangement in their regard; that quite apart from my duties to the Emperor, I was concerned only for the welfare of France and of Europe, which latter required that none should cause further confusion such as the inevitable restlessness of France must lead to, were one's pet revolution to be made there. . . .

The Tsar listened to all my points with attention, kindliness, and impartiality, and then gave me the most positive assurance that his choice had not yet been made. Their Majesties, he added, would not allow themselves to be guided by the slightest prejudice; nor were they in the least deceived by intrigue of any sort. Because their uppermost wish was to see France happy and peaceful, they would do nothing hasty. So far as he was concerned, he asked only to be enlightened; but the welfare of nations and the whole world's need of rest demanded that there be no peace with Napoleon. In order to save the Emperor his throne, they would be compelled to lay him under such terms as France might feel herself wounded by—and that was something which had to be avoided if the peace were to be kept.

Speaking of our position in the field, and of the possibility that we might put it to advantage, he added that if there were any risks to be run his allies preferred, as he did, to take these risks immediately, while all the Powers were assembled sword in hand. It was far better, he told me, to make an end of the business to-day, than to be under the necessity of coming back later on—even after a period of years—everyone from his own land and he from St. Petersburg.

He remarked that this degree of unanimity and accord had not been reached without difficulty. It had been no easy matter to bring the cabinets to their present pitch of mutual confidence, which the common peril alone had been able to induce; wherefore this agreement must be taken advantage of. No one, he said, could have any idea what hard work it had been for him to hold this union together, to quiet misgivings, and to make the voice of jealousy be still. The Coalition never could have budged if he personally had not been with the army to smoothe everything over; and so forth, and so on.

Furthermore, said he, foresight was the prime duty of princes, because they had to stand guardian over their peoples' welfare and tranquillity. So far as he was concerned, therefore, the loyalty which Russia had shown him made it his bounden duty to secure her repose henceforth.

I asserted once more that the proposed peace with France would deprive the Emperor of every means for troubling Europe, and that this peace would be the best guaranty of Europe's repose—if such were indeed the real end in view. However, I told the Tsar, all that was then in preparation went to show that any such tranquillity was the merest pretext: that the peace of France could not be secured by a change of dynasties. Neither could one's hatred of a father destroy the rights of his son. The peace of France, which they quite properly set so much store by, could be no security of anything unless the existing order were preserved. Even admitting—though I thought it impossible—that the army might agree to the Emperor's abdication: what then? Under that supposition a Regency, with all its helplessness, was bound to strike Their Majesties as the best government to impose upon France,

since they were so determined to weaken her and so prone always to take alarm at her strength.

The Tsar, speaking in generalities, assured me that there was no desire to cause confusion; far from it. There was nothing but eagerness to preserve whatever could secure our own peace and yet be consistent with Europe's. When I ventured a few words about what Austria and all the Sovereign Rulers had staked for the Imperial Dynasty's survival, the Tsar caught me up at once. He had refrained, he said, from saying anything more to me of Austria's intentions, since family matters would thus have been involved, and sensibilities, too, which he would not care to injure in any way. However, since I had brought up the name of Austria, he could assure me as before that the Emperor Francis and his Cabinet had declared themselves, in this instance, wholly indifferent to the matter of family. Ever since the Austrian Emperor had become convinced that the Emperor Napoleon was talking peace only so as to gain time for splitting the Allies, and thus enabling himself to follow out the scheme of conquests and supreme power which he had formerly adopted, the Emperor Francis, no less than his associates, had been strongly against Napoleon. The Austrians themselves, said the Tsar, would prove this statement to me.

Upon leaving, I went into Talleyrand's apartment[1] to make a final effort, should occasion offer, and to sound his views on the Regency. It was said that he had spoken favourably of it some time before, and had even done so again, at the last meeting of the Council of Regents prior to the Empress's departure, in an attempt to persuade Her Majesty to remain at Paris with the King of Rome. It was the

[1] Alexander occupied the first floor of the house on the Rue Saint-Florentin, and Nesselrode the second. Talleyrand reserved the *entresol* for himself, and lodged the Provisional Government there as well. That floor comprised six rooms. Three faced the court, and were given over to the public; and three faced the Rue de Rivoli. The Government deliberated in the Prince of Benevento's bedroom, the clerks occupied the salon, and the Prince granted private audiences in the library. Cf. *Mémoires du comte Beugnot*, Paris (Dentu), 1886, II, 88.

common report that he had had frequent conferences about the Regency with Her Majesty's intimates.

I found him closeted with his party-whips. He had but a moment to spare me—and I could pry but the most evasive answers out of him. It struck me that Talleyrand's judgement had been upset by the triumph of his faction: that he was in the same predicament as a man who finds himself compelled to marry, for more reasons than one, a girl for whom he has no love and small respect. I knew at second hand that he ruled out the idea of the Regency only because, said he, it was an impossibility with the Emperor living. . . . From the few words he said to me, I inferred that he had made up his mind to the Restoration but was unwilling to discuss the matter with me openly. However, despite his reticence, I could make out perfectly well that all was lost for the Emperor, and for his dynasty too—if, that is to say, the Prince of Benevento were strong and clever enough to seduce hangers-on and minor personages, as he had already done with the officials then presiding over Paris and the Senate.

As I went out of his bedroom into the salon, I found there Messrs. Pasquier, Dalberg, Jaucourt, the Abbé de Pradt, et cetera. Pasquier came over to me and said quietly that I ought not to deceive myself about what was going on; that, having reached his own decision, he felt bound to warn me that he had declared for the Bourbons. Meanwhile, M. de Pradt was haranguing away in a professorial tone, as though he had to make converts and thought it needful for me to be a witness of his unseemly discourse and his apostasy. He spoke of emergencies, of the steps one had taken, of the rise in stock-quotations that had been produced, according to him, by the certainty of the Emperor's downfall. He spoke of His Majesty in terms so indecent that I could not suppress my wrath. I was beside myself, and told M. de Pradt in so many words that anyone who insulted his Sovereign and benefactor was a dirty scoundrel.

He tried to apologize, but I was too angry to listen. I pursued him; and if he had not eluded me while Jaucourt, Pasquier, and the rest of them stepped between us, I should

have settled my score with him by way of the door or window. Since there was a number of witnesses to this scene, I feel called upon to tell exactly how it took place,[1] though confessing how violently I let myself be carried away. The tame manner in which those gentlemen sought to excuse him showed me clearly enough that they were far from approving of his language.

Once back at my sister's house, I was beset by the most painful thoughts. I was heart-broken over France's predicament, and the Emperor's, and one's impotence—how clear it was, alas, even then!—to secure the triumph of one's dearest interests in the face of so much passion and intrigue. That was as wretched a day as ever I spent.

However, since the Tsar Alexander had dropped a few words which let me see that there was still some uncertainty, and that a final decision had not as yet been reached, I availed myself of his kindliness towards me: I returned to the attack. I pointed out to him that as far as Europe was concerned the Bourbons were a dead issue—that an immediate and lasting peace was all that mattered to the Continent. Their restoration, as I remarked to the Tsar, could not possibly pacify France, and would therefore fail of its purpose. The best possible guaranty of Europe's peace—and our own—was the Emperor's readiness to subscribe to the surrender of territory

[1] Pasquier relates this incident as follows: "As I was coming out of Talleyrand's study, I met the Duke of Vicenza. He stepped up to me, drew me into the recess of a window, and told me with a good deal of heat that he was mortally offended with me because I had treated him, the night before, with dissimulation such as he did not deserve. 'A word of explanation will relieve you of that unhappy, impression,' I told him; 'but this is no place for it. We shall meet again.' Thereupon, as he was crossing the room, the Abbé de Pradt accosted him, nose in air, and flung these words at him: 'Monsieur le Duc, tell your master that shares that were quoted at 45 on the twenty-ninth stand at 63 to-day.' 'Yes,' replied M. de Caulaincourt; 'and I shall add that the man whom I have always seen at the head of his most assiduous flatterers is to-day the first to insult him. There is nothing unusual about that.' There were at least twenty people present." (Pasquier, *Mémoires*, II, 268.)

that was required of him. It would be just as well I said, to bear in mind that not a throne would now be safe but for His Majesty's counter-revolutionary activities: that he was a guarantee for them all. I did my best to put the Tsar on his guard against certain individuals who cared nothing for the Bourbon restoration except as their personal ambition might be served thereby, and their private grudges.

Opinions such as those, when uttered before a prince of his stamp, were bound to be not wholly wasted—and indeed it struck me that he wavered now and then. In those first moments, too, the Allied Rulers felt that they were sitting on a volcano. Their success astounded them more than it did us; our very docility aroused their suspicions. Could these Frenchmen—these seeming dwarfs in their own capital—be of the same race that for a generation had made its glory felt to the ends of the earth?

I made fresh advances, meanwhile, to such men as had some influence by virtue of their position. I knocked at every door in vain, alas! Even the functionaries of the Imperial Household already felt themselves excused from their duties as subjects. Fortune had turned her back on the Emperor. . . . I was grief-stricken, but gave less rein to my discouragement. I redoubled my efforts, as I saw myself the only champion in the field.

The need to find some solution for this problem of the abdication grew more pressing with each subsequent event, for the number of our friends was diminished as the hours rolled by. In dealing with this question, however, I was conscious of nothing but the scrupulous concern which a devoted subject is bound to feel. No matter how difficult the position, I could not admit the possibility that the Emperor might abdicate; for that would have been playing into the hands of his enemies. The powers would then have gathered that here was a sacrifice which they could demand; whereas I was maintaining that this was an international matter—that any such idea was repugnant to everyone's views and wishes—that an abdication was, accordingly, unthinkable. On the other hand, were I to rule out all thought of regents,

I stood to lose the support of the very men whose voice was decisive in Senate and Council; for the open sentiment of Paris, as I could see, was hostile to the Emperor—yet the men who were least ill-disposed held for the Regency.

My whole concern, in that difficult and exacting position, was to do the right thing. I harped upon the sworn oaths of loyalty to the father. I spoke of our misfortunes; of how important it was not to add to them through timidity; of the Emperor, who alone could make good our losses. Yet it was that ascendancy of his—that very vigour which till then had prevented him from submitting to peace with dishonour—for which they mistrusted him. Their misgivings about the Regency all fined down to the fact that His Majesty, they felt sure, would leave no stone unturned until he had regained power.

Such, then, were the considerations which chilled the ardour of those who were well-disposed towards the King of Rome, and by which his claims were weakened rather than advanced. They made it easy sailing for anyone who could tax himself with malice aforethought. . . . The mere notion that the Emperor might have some influence over his son was enough to blanch the cheeks of the men who had so light-heartedly proclaimed His Majesty's collapse. What they chiefly dreaded was the aftermath of their defection. With things in that posture, nothing but a battle won beneath the walls of Paris could save him. The Parisian rank-and-file was on his side; his cannon would have regained him many friends. The number of the Emperor's declared enemies was small, as yet. Truth to tell, however, that minority was composed of men whom he had honoured and promoted. By virtue of the posts they held, they found themselves in a position to help cut his throat. In turning upon their benefactor, they availed themselves of the very power and respect with which he had endowed them. Men of moderate temper, and who held themselves detached, were not consulted.

As for the invaders, the Emperor's name and his glory hung over them like giant threats, and impressed them all the more because they knew the full force of his influence with

the troops. They saw in him so formidable a power that it required the concerted cowardice and treachery of every place-holder and man of mark, together with all the animus of such men as Talleyrand and Pozzo di Borgo, to set Their Majesties' minds at ease over the possible outcome of the course they wished to pursue.

During the afternoon Baron Pasquier came to see me. He told me that he had taken advantage of our meeting at the Prince of Benevento's to relieve me of all doubt whatever concerning the choice which he had felt obliged to make. He went on to say that in belief and principle alike he had always favoured his former masters, the Bourbons. After our revolutions, when Napoleon had been proclaimed Emperor by the nation and recognized by the whole Continent, he, Pasquier, had given him loyal and faithful service, as being the proper Sovereign of France; and this he had continued until after the enemy's occupation of the capital. Now, since he could see that France had but one chance of salvation, he had seized it. He had been restrained at first by the fear of foreign ambition, and later by the dread of civil war; but once his mind was at rest as to those points, he had let himself be guided by duty alone, which required his submission to his monarch of old. He added that he had not told me of his plans when I came to see him, because he had been anxious, before taking his stand, to learn the Allied intentions in respect of France. With full reassurance as to that, however, he had come out for the King—and he would have stopped by in the morning to tell me so, but for the fact, which I would readily understand, that he had been kept at home by a thousand-and-one details attributable to circumstances and the duties of his office. He had seized the earliest opportunity to warn me; for he felt himself in honour bound to leave me in no doubt of his intentions, and to let me know that I should not count on him to further the Emperor's cause in any way.[1] He entreated me, moreover, to report this to His Majesty, and to tell him that he had burned all the secret-police papers by which any individuals might have been compromised. He had wished

[1] See also Pasquier, *Mémoires*, II, 269.

to give me these details, he said, because they might be of interest to the Emperor and many other persons.[1]

Baron Pasquier's fair warning was only too well borne out by everything I had learned. Though he had spoken to me of none but himself, the behaviour of many another man, equally distinguished but not so frank, had done nothing to raise my spirits. That which had taken place, together with the general state of mind, gave me sufficient means of judging how far weakness already had been driven down the paths of treason.

It was clear, then, that the hope of saving the Emperor's throne could be grounded upon nothing except the persistent misgivings of the Allies as to whether or not the army, and the country at large, would willingly desert him—and that, too, in favour of the Bourbons. Every safeguard of the Emperor's power was already compromised; a few more hours, and all might be lost. It was vital to make him see the perils of his situation. I had written him again that morning; my letter told him the whole of my misgivings. He had anticipated them; for he told me, upon my rejoining him at Fontainebleau, that the private information which he had had from the faithful Duke of Treviso about the military developments prior to the capitulation had merely confirmed every doubt he had felt since Fromenteau—and that the same was true of what he had learned about the enemy's entrance into Paris, as told to him by M. Fabvier, who had remained there until the surrender was completed. He was perfectly sure that the Tsar, the British, and the King of Prussia would try to revolutionize the capital. What he hoped, however, was that Austria, who controlled the Generalissimo of the Coalition, would not lend herself from the very start to that

[1] Before his departure on March 30, the Duke of Rovigo had given Pasquier a portfolio containing "all his correspondence with the Emperor." That evening the Prefect of Police had checked over the contents. He says (Pasquier, *Mémoires*, II, 229) that several of the Emperor's letters dealt with improper advances to which Marie Louise had been subjected by Joseph Bonaparte. Pasquier burned this file on the thirty-first. See also Rovigo, *Mémoires*, IV, 383.

scheme, which he said was contrary to her interests. During the peace negotiations he never had been willing to see that he might be the victim of Austrian policy—nor had his belief completely altered, even yet. Neither could he believe, at first, in the wholesale desertion of officialdom and the men whom he had treated the best.

Here is the point where we ought to make certain observations: they will show clearly that after Frankfort the Coalition exercised no political foresight. It lived, so to speak, from hand to mouth. Its every plan and project was contingent upon each day's developments. Indulgence leads to appetite: all in turn began to wish for everything they dared. England, who had little to risk or lose on the Continent, since her troops were operating independently and with great circumspection, fanned the flames which had been kindled by every cabinet's sense of injury and terror. Europe took far more pride in the spitefulness of a few hotheads than in the political wisdom of its statesmen and the talent of its generals. The day after the enemy entered Paris, they had outgrown their demands of the night before; which in turn had exceeded that morning's hopes, as the latter had surpassed the Coalition's every thought and intention upon crossing the Rhine; which hopes were very different indeed from the plans, promises, and desires with which they had come to Frankfort. The Allies were willing to negotiate there. They were honestly desirous of the peace they were offering, for to them it seemed that the Rhine was a barrier strong as brass, and manned by the proud citizenry that lay between us: they credited Frenchmen under the Empire with the vigour of Frenchmen of the Republic.

The Coalition was reckoning with the Emperor, then, in the belief that his privileged position would enable him to use what was left of his military machine to bolster up our sense of patriotism. Accordingly, they thought that to enter France would jeopardize everything. This land, this home of the brave, seemed to them inviolable; whence the anxiety of the Coalition for peace, with our limits set at the Rhine, the Alps, the Pyrenees. . . . The brief moment when the Em-

peror might have secured those conditions was let slip; whereupon the enemy took heart from being in touch with our frontiers, from particulars they heard of how things stood with us at home, and as the result, it may be, of a message issuing from the intrigue by which at that time we were betrayed.[1] Thus compelled to venture more than they wished —to attempt what appeared to them virtually impossible— they were obliged to think that they could bring it off because they had had to undertake it. Once they had set foot in the land, the enemy gained assurance from the quiet submissiveness they met with in the countryside generally, and from the eager haste of certain country squires, our army's speedy retreat without defending our mountain passes, and the ease of success. They grew more cautious, however, when sundry acts of reprisal in Old Burgundy and elsewhere proved to them that patriotism was merely dormant, and that a setback could raise everyone in arms against them. Their illusions were shattered by the victories of Montmirail and Champaubert. Thereafter, though they outnumbered us six to one, the enemy felt disposed to wait without so much as facing up to us until their whole reserve was at hand, whereupon their numbers might exempt them from the risks of battle.

The Tsar was forced, willy-nilly, either to advance in support of the venturesome Blücher, or to keep up a retreat that was bound to be as encouraging to the French as it was hurtful to the Allied cause in France and in the eyes of Europe. Alexander, urged on by Pozzo di Borgo, decided to risk all— to pass over every adverse consideration and strike for Paris. This was a throw of dice, rather than a piece of strategy. It was in this mood of forced bravado, yet amid the atmosphere of an unavoidably cautious campaign, that Alexander appeared before the capital city. From that time on, seeing how his successes had outrun his hopes, he might well have banked on gaining a great deal; but there still were risks to be taken,

[1] Caulaincourt probably alludes to the letter carried by Vitrolles from Talleyrand to Nesselrode, and delivered to the Russian at Chaumont on March 10. Cf. Louis Madelin, *Le Consulat et l'Empire*, II, 284.

since, the Emperor and his army were within two days' march.[1]

Alexander, to be sure, was in the capital. However, he was cut off from his waggon-trains and his reserves, in the midst of a land which any reverse on his part could turn into a formidable enemy; and should he need to fight, he was on the point of having the populace of a city of seven hundred and fifty thousand at his heels. Thus he had no chance to be mistaken about the consequences of the course he might take; and so in turn he was not strongly inclined to force things to an issue for the sake of re-establishing the Bourbons. The occupation of Moscow had been handsomely avenged: the presence of the Russian Guards in Paris had satisfied his aim and salved his self-respect as Tsar and general alike. He demanded no other trophy whatever; he wished only to take the greatest possible advantage of the circumstances adverse to Napoleon, though without endangering the lives of his own men and the glory gained from his enterprise: wherefore I am led to think that it was the desertion of the Sixth Corps which cost the Emperor Napoleon his throne—or his son's, at any rate. For the European Act of Exclusion, as promulgated before the march into Paris, was directed against the Emperor alone; and the Allies, I repeat, never had any settled plan. Their policy was subject to the rule of circumstance—and they certainly would not have given battle and jeopardized everything in order to shut out the Regency.

Many an act and many a detail has slipped my mind, or has not come to my knowledge. I cannot, then, think myself called to write the history of that great drama. However, since I had some share in it, I intend to provide for its history the materials which can be had from none but me, and the record of which I believe that I owe to the Emperor's memory and to my country and my children.

[1] On May 14, 1814, Alexander said to Queen Hortense: "At the gates of Paris, all the generals advised against the seizure of the capital. We had barely a day's supply of ammunition, for the Emperor Napoleon had diverted and cut us off from all our army stores. . . . Alone against the lot of them, I persisted in wishing to attack." (*Mémoires de la reine Hortense*, II, 233.)

To return to Paris: the Tsar Alexander's hints there, and the Prince of Benevento's henchmen, had by now set every tongue wagging about the Bourbons, regardless of the fact that their restoration, far from gratifying the popular demand, would stun even their adherents and would leave every order of society discontented. Men in the prime of life knew nothing of them: and they scarcely lived in the recollection of the aged. . . . And what of the Tsar of Russia? It was plain to be seen that he had spoken of the Bourbons—or had let their name come up—merely because, in so difficult a moment, they might prove one stumbling-block the more in the Emperor Napoleon's path. He was free to say that their restoration would be no slight matter; nor did he make it an absolute prerequisite of peace. It goes without saying that his view of the French, and of the risks he might take, had changed appreciably since he had entered Paris and come in touch with the Prince of Benevento. Even so . . . it was his chief concern to run no further chances—to be well out of the whole business. He was anxious to see France contented, so that Europe might be at peace: and what he had in mind was the Emperor's removal. As the Tsar put it, he would be agreeable to anything once Napoleon was out of the way and could have no further voice in affairs.

The conquered wish to be even with the victor. The Emperor it was whom the foreigners wished to shut out at whatever cost, and whom the most noted Frenchmen—the chief beneficiaries of his favour—were sacrificing, so they said, for the sake of peace, but actually in order to serve their momentary ambition. This temper common to all parties was a wonderful help to the Prince of Benevento's faction; wherefore, with all the cleverness he is capable of, he played upon that mood to secure the triumph of the Restoration. In skilful fashion, he already had represented to the Allied Rulers that a legitimist victory would be a safeguard for every dynasty, and that the triumph of the Bourbons would be a healthy warning to every populace. According to him, that family's old roots were grounded in a party.

When dealing with the French, Talleyrand, at the outset,

spoke only of the necessity for getting rid of the Emperor, whom he represented as an insurmountable obstacle in the way of peace. Many were the men who had let themselves be carried away, without asking what was to be set up in place of the power they were hastening to destroy—without giving a thought to the consequences of their choice. They believed that they could not make their decision hastily enough, since, at that price, France was bound to secure terms for an advantageous and honourable peace: it was already as good as signed.

The worthiest citizens were caught by that attractive bait. They forgot that that peace, honourable and even profitable though it might be called, was offered at the point of foreign bayonets quartered in our capital, and that those bayonets would sign it when and as they pleased. The first step was followed by second thoughts; but then it was too late, for everyone believed himself already compromised. Thereupon, it was easy for the Prince of Benevento to make known how embarrassing—how dangerous, even—would be the regency of a wife and son with a husband and father, said he, playing eavesdropper. And so, some little time before the Tsar Alexander had made up his mind and closed the question, the Senate, stunned that it should have been so daring as to betray its benefactor the Emperor, had been forced to its decision by the dread of Napoleon's influence and the possibility of his return.

The Prince of Benevento, who brought this revolution about, was not the man to turn back; danger was too close at hand. He knew the men, French and foreign alike, with whom he had to deal. He could not help taking advantage of the weakness of Senators, and of the influence that a capital such as Paris exercises over the country at large: he had been too well enlightened by our revolutions. The departments that were accustomed every year to see our victorious columns passing through, and the trophies of our glory, and that were fondest of the Emperor, now found themselves compromised by invasion. The rest of the departments, though faithful too, were bound to be more amenable because less inspired

by recollection; and so the news of our reverses and of the occupation of Paris was certain to spread dismay. Under such circumstances, an order stamped with the word *Paris* was sure to produce the same effect everywhere as had, but lately, the magic signature *Napoleon*.

Such, then, was the reasoning on which he grounded the Restoration's hopes, and which he gave the Allied Rulers as a guaranty. They doubted for a while whether it was worth anything, or so they told me later; but the outcome showed that the guarantor had reckoned shrewdly. Everything, alas, fitted into his scheme. The Revolution, which had accustomed folk to changes of government—that Revolution, which had given equal birth to so many prodigies and so many crimes—had made men discontented even with their customs. Thanks to the greenness of its memory, the Revolution gave scope for anything. Malet's attempted *coup d'état* was not so out of the way.

In short, everything conspired to add to the Emperor's peril. The man who had proclaimed the Restoration during the very night after the surrender . . . had stolen a march on everybody, and had taken the lead in every question. He knew that a man who pauses in such a crisis of affairs slips backward and is lost. Talleyrand knew, also, that by forcing developments he might put an end to Their Majesties' dangerous uncertainty of mind—and that the Tsar would sponsor, if it were ready-made, the Revolution which he would not willingly seem to have provoked.

Talleyrand's first move was to give public employment to the Abbé de Montesquiou, who had long been known for a go-between of the Bourbon Princes, and likewise their secret agent; and to the Abbé he added the Duke of Dalberg and several other such distinguished malcontents, together with men of the stamp of Lambrechts, Jaucourt, Beurnonville, et cetera; and he swelled the numbers of his party with all the schemers that hive in Paris. The Duke of Dalberg and his compeers were inclined to favour the Duke of Orléans who, according to them, offered as much in the way of security as the cabinets and dynasties could wish. There, said they,

was a Prince who served as voucher for the Revolution and the army too, and who laid none of the embarrassments of a Restoration upon France or the world in general.

Such was the posture of affairs at Paris on April 2. . . . The Tsar, astounded at the tractability of *la grande nation*, was even more surprised by the fickleness of our statesmen, and by their readiness to overthrow the power to which they were bound by duty and self-interest, since that power had given them their standing. Alexander, therefore, was put to it to believe all that he heard from the zealous Bourbon faction. Open-eyed with an ear to the ground, he felt that his senses were betraying him. . . . That accounted for his hesitancy—that, and the foresight which was mandatory in the midst of a great city whose populace, as he knew, had no share in the schemes of the self-constituted ruling faction.

At the outset, those misgivings produced a state of uncertainty which was favourable to me, and which I turned to advantage; but they were soon dispelled. Moreover, when every place-holder and every man with the smallest claim to distinction had come out against the Emperor, what was there to do or to hope for? The revolution against him was an accomplished fact from the very start. NO PEACE WITH NAPOLEON: that dictum was the death of his cause. Opinion was divided over nothing except the nature of what was to take his place. One wavered between the Regency, which seemed certain to reconcile many an interested party—or else the Duke of Orléans or some other noted figure, who should be reassuring to them all—and the Bourbon legitimacy which, according to their acknowledged party-leader Talleyrand, enjoyed the advantage of having a principle to back it, and a claim established long ago.

That right of legitimacy alone, said he, could supersede a right to rule which had been gained through the suffrages of the people, and conquered by enormous prestige, and established as firmly as the Emperor's right was, and his dynasty's. According to Talleyrand, the old roots of the Bourbons still had life in them.

The Duke of Orléans could represent only a usurpation like

any other, backed not by moral right but by special interests. Therefore the claims of any other man would be as good as his, and many, because of their recent services, could rival him for the throne—whereas none could contest the rights of the Bourbons, now that the Emperor had been ruled out by the force of events. Everybody, according to the Prince of Benevento, would be reconciled by the choice of the Bourbons under a constitution like England's, and with a bi-cameral Legislature. The Senate would form the nucleus of the Upper House; and thanks to its position, it would now find itself called upon to draw up a constitution which should check the excessive claims of the emigrés and limit the powers of the Crown after the British fashion. Talleyrand had told those gullible Senators: "You will make the laws under which you shall be governed, and which the Bourbons will be forced to accept before they can reign"—and he kept on telling them so. Because the Bourbons, said he, would require the army's services, they would prove more acceptable than any other scheme of government, even to the Emperor's warmest adherents, once it was clear that none could save Napoleon's crown for him or for his son. And they would be more acceptable to the die-hard Republicans, too, because their want of popularity would compel them to proceed so cautiously that the new constitution and the Anglicized institutions would have time to grow established.

As you see, this revolution made giant strides. It was successful beyond the wildest hopes of its fomenters. Everything favoured it: one must admit that chance and a thousand unforeseen circumstances, rather than good management, bore a part in it; for the invading forces were just as surprised at finding themselves in Paris, and at their subsequent success, as the Parisians were to see them there.

The citizens were surprised—one might better say thunderstruck—by the victors' moderation. In particular, Alexander's restraint in such a circumstance had served to perfection the coalition of Crowned Heads and the grudge they bore against the man who had so often defeated them. . . . "He asks nothing for himself," ran the word; "he wishes nothing,

demands nothing but the blessings of peace. . . ." His gracious manners had enchanted every eye, his words had won him many a heart. The name of *peace* was magical; anyone who spoke it seemed divine. The word *war* evoked a shudder. That Spartan woman who would rather see her son dead than the enemy triumphant, would have seemed worse than a barbarian. How war-weary everyone was! The need of rest was so universally felt through every class of society, and in the army, that peace at any price had become the ruling passion of the day; and the whole force of this sentiment was levelled against the Emperor Napoleon, whom they accused of having rejected peace—of not honestly desiring it, even now.

It was a waste of time to try and explain the motives that had prevented his treating, or to try and speak of the new sacrifices that had been demanded without guaranty of peace. . . . In their complaints against the Emperor at that time, the French were somewhat more unfair than were our enemies; and their temper militated against him far more formidably than did the troops that had taken his capital, and over which he could much more readily have triumphed. In so saying, I speak of the views that I heard many people express, and of the sentiments that I encountered amongst those with whom I spoke. Since I am writing strictly as a memorialist, I feel myself bound to stick without bias to the letter of the story, and to save the praise and blame until later on.

At Paris I was held under the compulsion of severe restraint; I was too well watched to behave as I pleased, and too well known to dare evade that compulsion or for anyone to dare come and see me.[1] Thus during those early moments there were many particulars that I did not know. True, I might have tried to keep in touch with the men who should have been able to second me, and with those whom I had gone to

[1] Fault was found with Caulaincourt for this circumspection: "Thus he was forced to leave everyone sunk in his own stupefaction, and to content himself with observing what had become a dire extremity. I have since learned from employees . . . that they interpreted Caulaincourt's silence after another fashion, and were convinced that he was fully informed of everything which they only surmised as yet." (Rovigo, *Mémoires*, IV, 416.)

see because they were the least hostile. But what would a few scattered individuals, though never so distinguished, have been able to do for my cause in the face of this combined force of opinion amongst high officialdom and of a Europe under arms? Some comforting signs of loyalty to the Emperor; perhaps a few particulars helpful to his cause: what possible effect would these have had upon our destinies when so many hearts were drawn to us no longer, and when faces no longer so much as troubled to deceive?

Seeing that the French were abandoning their Emperor, I attacked the problem once more from its Austrian side. If perchance the Emperor Francis still felt the least interest in his son-in-law, let alone in his daughter, then the army's attitude, its courage or at a pinch its daring, might give us some grounds for hope. That was the one hope remaining to me. Thus it was vital for me to make sure whether the Emperor of Austria was on his way—whether there was any word of him—whether he would not be better disposed towards his son-in-law than his general was. In order to make certain of all this, and to see whether the Austrians were always the same hostile looks, I went to Prince Schwarzenberg's—ostensibly to ask him for a courier's passport so as to send the Emperor Napoleon an account of my mission and of the delays that were hindering my return. He refused it, and added that he would give me a passport for my own use; in view of the existing situation, I could not remain in Paris. Those words were far from consoling. (I was ready enough to catch their drift; for as often as I saw the Tsar, he told me that he was being urged to send me away because, though he declined to believe it, I was intriguing in Paris.) The rest of my conversation with the Generalissimo was of no great interest: I could have no doubt but that he was a party to the most hostile faction. His officers shunned conversation, but in a manner so polite as to prove to me that politics had not yet conquered every generous heart.

I learned that our advance upon Saint-Dizier had forced the Emperor of Austria to fall back to Langres, and that our subsequent movements had actually cut him off from the

army. I took advantage of this circumstance by offering anew to give passports which would enable a courier to go direct to the Emperor Francis by passing through our lines; and once again I urged the Generalissimo to send him word of what was afoot. Schwarzenberg refused my offers as he did my demands. Everything, surely, must have been fated to conspire against the Emperor, to the end that the slight and costly success which we had gained over Wintzingerode[1] might keep the Emperor Francis cut off from the other monarchs at the very moment when he was the one who was bound to feel himself obliged to show us more consideration than the rest. The fatality of those days dogged us at every turn and delivered us up to our most inveterate foes.

I resume the thread of developments. Immediately upon his arrival, the Tsar had announced his intention of deciding nothing until he had sounded the views of influential men, and what he called the will of the nation. Apparently, moreover, that prince attributed to the Senate, the senior State body, an influence and a strength of judgement that it neither had nor was worthy to possess. Therefore the Prince of Benevento, certain of his control over these men from Revolutionary days, resolved to make use of them. He assembled the small number of Senators remaining in Paris. This rump was largely made up of men reputed for their spinelessness or as members of the Opposition; and in such practised hands it could be nothing unless a pliant tool. He decided to rely upon this as his authority for ensuring the success of the faction in whose favour he had declared himself. For France's sake, though more especially for the Tsar Alexander's, it was vital to Talleyrand that the measures he advocated should bear the semblance of a national sanction—of a reasoned opinion on the part of the chief body in the State. To that end, it was needful for him to lend a quasi-legal aspect to the government which he already had organized, and whose director he was. And those cowardly Senators, who never had distinguished themselves by so much as a single utterance upon matters of the highest importance (not even

[1] The Saint-Dizier engagement, March 26, 1814.

when it was a question of conscripting two or three hundred thousand men), needed no further coaxing to dethrone the man who had established them. They subscribed to everything that was wished or demanded of them by the vice-Grand Elector; their betrayal of their benefactor, the Emperor, was as cold-blooded as their obedience to him had been servile. In true revolutionary style they dethroned the father whose son they had idolized within the week, when they, and every Parisian along with them, had sworn to defend the Imperial heir to the very death: a sorry instance, that, of the rank aftermath of the Revolution; of an upheaval in which expediency has ever taken the place of principle—a pitiful example of human frailty, ambition, cowardice, and short-sightedness.

The Senate named Talleyrand President of the Provisional Government. The choice of Counts Jaucourt and Beurnonville, Senators both, called for no discussion; they were insiders. As for the approval of the two other names on the Prince of Benevento's list, the Senators at least betrayed some surprise over one of those nominations; but both were passed. The ringleaders had not shown the list until the session itself, thus leaving no chance for concerted action beforehand. Everyone whispered, betrayed astonishment, complained, and pulled a wry face, but, as had been anticipated, this lack of foreknowledge frightened everybody out of daring to refuse his vote. And so the Abbé de Montesquiou's name was drawn triumphant from the Senatorial urn, despite the food for thought that that choice gave to sundry Senators who, thanks to their closer acquaintance with politics, could read it as a sign of the Bourbon Restoration, which none of them desired.[1] The Duke of Dalberg's nomination likewise caused remark. Seeing, however, that he was Talleyrand's aide-de-camp and puppet, none of them felt capable of refusing this proof of respect for a colleague who stood at the head of affairs, in response to whose summons they had dared convene, and who would have to be looked up to for patronage, now that he had been made a viceroy. Therefore M. de Dalberg's

[1] Montesquiou's activities as Bourbon secret agent had been uninterrupted throughout the Empire's existence.

name was rushed through, known though he was for the leader of complots with the enemy. Once they were home again (so two of the Senators told me), Montesquiou's nomination gave rise to second thoughts. A number of Senators met again that evening and the morning after, only to perceive that they had committed themselves. They had put their foot in it; how could they back out? As the ringleaders made clear to those who had been merely weak, it was too late now to look behind: one had either to follow along in the direction indicated, or else run the risk of finding oneself ruined and alone.

Thus the Provisional Government of France was constituted: first, at the sweet will of the vice-Grand Elector; second, by virtue of a Russian proclamation, posted in Paris since the night before, in the name of a Power whose cannon had fired on Paris on March 30, and whose troops at the very moment still were fighting against those Senators' sons who, more loyal than their fathers, had not deserted their colours; and finally, in the name of Russians, Prussians, and Austrians, whom, on April 1st, the *Sénat conservateur* dared to proclaim as friends whose caprice or whose ascendancy was capable of organizing a power national in scope.

At the same time, the General Council of the Paris Commune had been initiated into the same mysteries. It too had issued a statement—instigated, I am told, by the Prefect of Paris, who had called all its members together, though he still held title as the Emperor's Prefect of the Seine.[1] The day will come when he must speak in his own defence if he wishes to clear himself before the bar of history of the charges of ingratitude and treason to which he is liable. It is asserted that when he was consulting his father-in-law in regard to this matter, his sister-in-law, the Duchess of Piacenza, who was present, said to him, "Brother, there is reason enough and to spare for finding fault with others—but that is no excuse for you to be ungrateful."

What sanctities have we left among mankind? What is the sense of social institutions? We find that the spectacle

[1] Chabrol. Cf. Pasquier, *Mémoires*, II, 271.

which Frochot the Revolutionary made of himself at the time of the retreat from Moscow did not save his successor in office, the well-born Count Chabrol, from committing a still graver breach of trust. What good is an oath if history puts no brand on the breaker of it?

The Emperor's fate was settled; there could be no more doubt about that. All uncertainties on that score had been dispelled by everything I learned about the course of events, and by everything I was ignorant of, concerning the plots and schemes then centring in Paris, but which might be inferred from the behaviour of the chiefs in powers. I knew from my own observation, alas, that the Senate had even come out against the Regency. True, such knowledgeable men as had remained in Paris were free to admit that the Regency alone was capable of safeguarding France's interests as a whole; but those men dared not proclaim their views. They were stunned by the ascendancy that was conceded to the invaders, by the character and speed of this revolution, and they were terrified by the armed forces that threatened us. In those first hours the Bourbon Restoration was hoped for and desired by none but foreigners and a few influential men who, having seized control of affairs, wished to further their own ambition by playing politics. However, hedged in as they were by foreign bayonets, that very support which they were forced to seek would have been impotent to do more than wound the nation's sense of self-respect if the necessity for peace, then dominant over every faction, had not swept over the unthinking masses, too, when the latter were told that this change of dynasties was the sole means of bringing *rest* and *concord*. Those two words imposed even upon men whom they did not convince. The best minds rejected their own thoughts. Since Glory had not been able to save us, men gave themselves over to Chance without troubling about the consequences of the course that affairs were being allowed to run.

All the drawbacks of Restoration were clearly foreseen. There were no illusions respecting the outcome of the reinstatement of a dynasty which was incapable of taking over the helm without recalling to power those who had followed

that dynasty in its exile, who had suffered for it, who had been its devotees. But all these considerations were thrust aside. One would have thought at that instant that France, like the invaders, had but one concern—that, like the traitors, the French had but one objective—to rid themselves of the Emperor, the sole obstacle to peace. It appeared, according to Lambrechts, General Colaud, and other confrères of the Talleyrand agency, that certain misfortunes, certain prejudices, could afford to be overlooked. Nevertheless, there were some, even amongst the party chiefs, who stood opposed to this change of government, and who disbelieved in the alleged profits that were to accrue from it. The Duke of Dalberg was cited as favouring the Duke of Orléans, or anyone else except the Emperor's family and the Bourbons. The Allies, so generous-seeming at the outset, and the Provisional Government with all its craft, kept repeating that the Bourbons alone could guarantee us favourable peace-terms—could secure us, that is, from being dismembered and made to pay excessive indemnities. In all justice, I must say for the Tsar Alexander that he never stressed the latter of those conditions. The rest of them, however, had no such self-restraint.

The men who were sufficiently enlightened to regard the problem from all sides did not deceive themselves, of course, either about what the nature of those advantageous terms would be when the day of reckoning came, or about the other disabling aspects of the Bourbon party. But their eyes were fixed on the main chance. They were too ambitious willingly to run the risk of not sharing for themselves in the triumphs of the winning side; they were fearful lest they compromise themselves by uttering a wise opinion . . . wherefore they held their tongues, moaned furtively in my presence, but made no effort to conceal from me that I could hope for nothing from them. And so I fought on alone at Paris for the Emperor and his dynasty. Alone, I stood up for him, and for France's real interests along with him; and I confess that if ever, in the course of a life devoted to world politics under circumstances that never were easy, I experienced the feeling of inner satisfaction that comes to a right-thinking man who believes in

doing his duty at all hazard in time of trouble—if ever that satisfaction were mine, I am not ashamed to say that it was on that sorry occasion at Paris, when I alone had no reason for blushing either at my behaviour or my sentiments.

The Senate's Act nominating the Provincial Government, together with the City Council's petition, had now given a distinctly White tinge to Allied opinion, which the Prince of Benevento was always at the bottom of; but the people of Paris bore no hand in these intrigues reinforced by the enemy's presence. The Parisians were concerned only with their immediate release from danger. They were plainly indifferent to all that was going on, and took no note of anything but the quiet and security they were enjoying in the midst of foreign troops—a state of repose which they appreciated all the more because they had so little expected to find it there. The capital's calmness served to increase assurance and was an effectual means to the Bourbons' success, for while it served to establish the united monarchs on a safe basis, it encouraged them and the conspirators, too, to dare anything.

The Restoration's most powerful backing lay in the politeness, the turns of speech, the liberal open-mindedness and accessibility of the Tsar Alexander, and in the loud assertion of how unbiased was his attitude. Whomsoever the bayonet could not subdue, he conquered. Alexander's rectitude, on the other hand, and his avowed concern for France's welfare, alarmed the conspirators. They were afraid lest he might come to regard the best interests of the country—and of Europe—in a different light; that the views of a few men of worth and distinction, if openly expressed, might make him change his mind. And so they hurried all the more to take advantage of this general indecision because the prevailing calmness, as they saw perfectly well, was merely stupefaction, the result of momentary shock. This seeming indifference therefore indicated nothing favourable towards the faction whose claims were being urged. . . . The conspirators realized that the temper then prevalent in the capital offered them no security for the future if developments perchance, or the dictates of strategy, forced the Allies to evacuate Paris.

Meanwhile, the Allied Sovereigns took heart of grace from this abdication of best minds, and from the supineness of this great civil population which, so they had supposed, would prove unruly. The latest intelligence from Fontainebleau, however, concerning troop-movements there and the Emperor's activities, made them think twice—wherefore they took counsel with one another. Since matters were beginning to look serious and to threaten consequences graver still, the invaders found upon reconsideration that the stand which they were being urged to take had many drawbacks. But the Provisional Government was alive to all the perils of its position. The news went round of a conversation which, so it was alleged, Marshal Marmont had had with Talleyrand on the eve of the capital's surrender.[1] Word ran wild that the marshals had appealed for someone to save the country, and that one of them had begun negotiations, even, in order to save the Emperor's life. Chicane already was attributing to them what thus far existed only as the objective of the Parisian ringleaders' concern and machinations. Already treason was assuming every possible mask, was making use of every conceivable pretext, in order to deceive the faithful soldiery and lure them into courses which perhaps they thought patriotic, and of which their ingenuousness and inexperience in affairs of this sort prevented their foreseeing the consequences. Sedition knocked at every brave man's door in the name of his dearest interests. Shortly, following the dissemination of rumours and newspapers, came the relaying of the Senate's procedure. It was insinuated that the country was waiting for salvation at the hands of another General Monk; that now the arms which had defended France so bravely, which had carried her fame so far afield, were called upon to save her. The citizen was wavering, the general was weak—and the erstwhile aide-de-camp was deluded. He became an ingrate, next he committed perjury, and finally turned traitor—and

[1] As a matter of fact, Talleyrand had called at Marmont's, in the Rue de Paradis, during the evening of March 30. See Marmont, *Mémoires*, VI, 250; Lavallette, *Mémoires*, II, 93; H. Houssaye, 1814, 529.

all as it were despite himself. . . . The Provisional Government set everything in motion to shake the fidelity of the army chiefs.

But let us return to what took place in the Council of Sovereigns. The position of our army, the Emperor's disposition of his forces, the plans of attack which he was believed to be making, the vigour of such a great captain's venturesome spirit, which was so well known and which I harped on continually, as well as on the fact that the troops were more inclined to fight than yield—all this, when word had come from Fontainebleau, lent weight to my reflections, to the Tsar Alexander's, and to the words of any men whose common sense was stronger than their passions.

Contrary to the Council's advice, and following Pozzo di Borgo's subtle hints, the Tsar alone had decided to march the Allied army on Paris, even though he knew that he had the Emperor Napoleon at his rear. But now he hesitated, unwilling to compromise everything when all was within his grasp. Unhoped-for success was his, and he the arbiter of it; why take chances? The Allied military position no longer looked secure. With a venturesome and desperate adversary so close at hand, there were disadvantages to evacuating Paris in order to take the field—yet there was also the temptation to hazard everything, now that the *dénouement* was in prospect and the desired goal so near.

"What have we to lose by treating for peace? Strip France of her power—tie Napoleon's hands, or evict him altogether—and what do we care who rules over the French? This is not our quarrel; why bleed for it? With home so far away, why risk losing the success that already is ours?" Such was the consensus of hostile opinion at that time. Danger was imminent, there were great doings afoot, and Their Majesties felt the prick of conscience over the Russian and Prussian blood that still might have to flow for the sake of their favoured faction. They had begun to hesitate since morning and to incline towards the Regency, which was equally acceptable on all sides and would bring the conflict to an end at once. Their attitude towards the Emperor Napoleon was

constant, however. Him they regarded always as a hindrance to their safety in days to come: wherefore they were resolute to dethrone him.

With the Emperor out of the question, the Allies then were amenable to anything—though of course the Regency suited them less than any other form of monarchy which might prove agreeable both to the country and the troops. For it was the part of wisdom, they felt, to conciliate the army, and it was for the army's sake that they consented to the Regency, awkward though they considered that that choice might prove if the Emperor remained at large. How could he be prevented from eavesdropping, as Talleyrand put it, and from regaining the scene? There lay the stumbling-block! In that moment of fright, however, they saw only profit to be had from closing the whole question. They hoped to find some means of steering clear of the peril which they foresaw, and which gave a vast advantage to the Bourbon party's active proponents, who were playing up theirs as the one faction through which the Allies might gain some support from the nation, whereas, barring the Regency, no other group offered any foothold whatever.

I had sensed this hesitancy on the part of the Allies; and some reliable sources gave me confirmation of it. I then set to work with a vengeance to hold the ground my cause had gained—and great therefore was the panic amid the tents of the Provisional Government. It redoubled its zeal and intrigues, and renewed its demands that I be sent packing. The Benevento faction, though backed now by several published edicts, and with the fervour of Pozzo di Borgo's unresting and factitious wit to secure Alexander's attention, was overtaken by reasonable misgivings; nor could it hide its uneasiness as to whether the Restoration would succeed.

The Tsar received me in the evening. As I had expected, he seemed less sure of what side to take than in the earlier conversations.[1] I insisted that the Regency it must be—

[1] According to Underwood (*Paris en* 1814, 243) and the *Journal d'un détenu*, 446, this second interview took place on April 1, between three and four o'clock, while Talleyrand was at the Senate.

always supposing that the Emperor and the troops could be brought to accept it; and I made not the least admisson that any other claimants deserved a second thought. Once more I remarked to him that a treaty with the Emperor—a treaty by which France was weakened, and which reduced her to within some approximation of her ancient limits—would accomplish Their Majesties' political ends just as well; by dictating peace-terms to him in his capital they would vindicate their self-respect. Restoration, I pointed out, would prolong the war and make it national as in 'ninety-three. Thus one would actually be giving the Emperor the means of fighting on, and the whole issue would become dubious again—including the very peace which now could be made in half a day. For the sake of a mere coterie, so I told the Tsar, he would be gambling with the glory he had won—and to do what?—to further a cause that meant nothing to Europe any longer, since every monarch had recognized the Emperor Napoleon, and Austria had gone so far as to make alliance with him. The Bourbons were not even a national issue any more. By espousing their cause the Allied Rulers would simply be playing cat's paw for a few discredited malcontents, for whose sake Their Majesties had no business to be risking the lives of so many honest men. Any ten Russians he might lose, said I, were worth far more to him than ten schemers resting easy; furthermore, he could stipulate immunity for the latter. I went on to remark that because he had undertaken to negotiate on behalf of all the monarchs, the full weight of responsibility for what was about to happen would fall on him. Europe stood to gain nothing by the decision he was being urged to make; the Continent had given over the Bourbon cause long since; and so saying I put the Tsar in mind of his former opinion of those princes, and of how his concern for them had been merely such as one feels over any instance of excessive ill-fortune.

He granted the fairness of my remarks, meanwhile speaking so guardedly that I could catch no hint of what his decision was. It struck me that at heart he was irresolute, or perhaps even inclined in my favour. Thereupon I added all the

comments that seemed most likely to form his determination. As he listened, discussing every point good-naturedly and without bias, my hopes revived.

And so I was forced to defend the interests of the Imperial heir at the cost of the Emperor his father, whose proxy I was, but whose claims were outlawed. No man, conscious of such a cruel weight of responsibility as I felt upon me, had ever found himself placed in a situation so precarious without any chance of consulting his principal. I cannot describe what I was going through. The thought of the Emperor's predicament, the reflexions called forth by the state of affairs and the pressure of circumstance, the contrast between the demands of policy now and the recollections of Tilsit and Erfurt which I was putting the Tsar in mind of . . . all this had raised me to the highest pitch of excitement.

I thought of the daring for which the Emperor stood condemned, but which it was impossible not to admire—his fatal self-assurance—the blindness that led him to hazard everything rather than subscribe to terms which he called shameful, and which now I was offering without his consent. What he had done for our country, its institutions, the public works for which France had him to thank—the thought of these conflicted in my mind with the fact of his desertion by so many ungrateful cowards loaded with his favours and unworthy, as I was telling Alexander, of the protection of a high-minded, liberal prince like himself. Last of all, there was the personal difference between my status during my late dealings with Alexander at Petersburg and my standing now in the Tsar's regard at Paris. Such memories, such contrasts made me importunate—perhaps even persuasive. . . .

The Tsar Alexander's kindliness on this occasion was extreme, I must admit. Rejecting my demands in obedience to his policy, he yet appeared to encourage my zeal out of the goodness of his heart. His concern was evident. Every point which we had already discussed he resumed a dozen times over, seeking to convince me that his motives for refusal or delay (I felt that a decision was vital—this struck me as the decisive moment) were untinged by personal resentment,

of which he was incapable in so grave an issue; his people's welfare was the basis of his resolve. He debated as his Minister might have done at some other time, without a word of bitterness for the past. With conviction, though with restraint when touching on current matters, he was full of deference in speaking of the Emperor; and he made vast allowances for the great man who could have salvaged everything a fortnight back, but who confessedly had fallen unyielding beneath the blows of Allied Europe. Often, touched by my emotion which I could not suppress, he grasped my hands affectionately to steady me, accompanying that gesture with words of concern for the Emperor's person or with some expression of esteem for me.

"As sovereign," he was saying, "I am charged with vast interests which it is my duty to protect, just as you are defending the interests of the Emperor. For my peoples' sake and Europe's, too, I am obliged to seek every safeguard, exact every guarantee dictated by the Emperor Napoleon's ambition and his spirit of adventure. How would he respect the terms of a peace imposed on him at Paris? How indeed, after two months of steadily refusing to make peace with the threat of our entry there staring him in the face? His situation distresses me. I have felt such admiration for him in so many respects that I cannot help being sorry now, when his courage and your country's have made you worthy of a better fate. But Providence, by which the days of his glory were numbered, set a period to them for your happiness as well as ours —that is, if you stop to think. Finally, we do not come for revenge, regardless of how much we have suffered. We forget what harm people have done us, as soon as we see them suffering for it too. We call upon France to give us the peace and quiet which she stands as much in need of as we do. We demand nothing of you but what is for your own good: let the Emperor Napoleon choose between his own interest and that of your generous nation, which has done so much for him."

The sharpness with which I sometimes met the tempered severity of that discourse made no difference in the kindliness of his tone. However, perceiving that this discussion was

over-exciting me—that, by aggravating my highly emotional state, it brought me to the breaking-point—he said to me: "Do not give up hope—nothing is settled yet. . . ." And there he paused.

Nothing settled yet! I cannot say what I felt when I heard those words. But how short-lived my joy was, and how harshly interrupted! My heart sank at the words which followed—and remembering that transition from hope to despair, it sinks even now:

"I shall see you to-morrow and give you an answer which you may take to Fontainebleau at once. Do not humour yourself too much, though, and especially not in the belief that there may be any agreement to treat for peace with the Emperor. For that could only be contrived by demanding safeguards—strongholds within the country proper—and by forcing France to make great sacrifices which she might possibly take upon herself, but which it is neither the policy nor the purpose of the Allied Sovereigns to require of her."

Squeezing my hand then, and drawing me to his arms, he added kindly:

"My dear fellow, calm yourself! Your zeal, your devotion to the cause you are defending, cannot help but increase the concern with which one is bound to approach a matter so important as this, in which it delights me to assure you how dispassionate I am."

Meantime the Provisional Government was getting organized. It sought to establish its power in the departments, and above all to win over public opinion. With these ends in view it sent the conscripts home,[1] and, as I have said already, it worked underhand to disorganize the army and bring the leaders to its side. It issued orders to speed the Pope on his way;[2] and persistently, in the belief that I was a factor in the

[1] A decree of April 2 authorized assembled conscripts to return to their homes. Cf. Louis de Viel-Castel, *Histoire de la Restauration* (Paris, 1860), I, 230.

[2] On April 2 the Provisional Government passed a resolution to the effect "That, having learned with sorrow of the obstacles opposed to the Pope's return to his States," it "decreed that every impediment to his journey be at once removed." This decree

Continued on next page

Tsar's vacillation, it bore down with its whole weight to procure my dismissal, on the ground that my presence at Paris prevented royalist opinion from breaking forth. There was one council meeting after another. Pozzo di Borgo was fervid in the cause of Restoration. Nesselrode saw therein a device for enfeebling France, and he hoped that it would make for the tranquillity of Europe; but his nature was temperate and cautious. He, like the Tsar, checked off the hopes which this Restoration aroused in them (and towards which they were inclined) against the inconveniences which might come of it if the war were protracted thereby, and if it led to dissatisfaction in France. Like Alexander, too, he left the door ajar to every hope, and kept open house for pretensions and schemes of whatever sort—always provided that the Emperor Napoleon was no longer head of the government.

How the hours seemed to drag! What reason had I for humouring myself with the prospect of success when every man's hand was against me, French and foreign alike? How painful it is to number one's compatriots with the foe. . . . This reflexion added inexpressibly to my grief, destroying the feeble remnant of my hopes.

The morning arrived—that moment which was to decide our destinies. A new council finally was called at the Tsar's, and thither the partisans of Restoration repaired, fully believing that their cause was in a parlous state.

Please do not think for a moment that I would give myself the slightest credit for this altered disposition; surely not, when a wise and far-sighted policy enjoined that change upon a prince who was too enlightened not to reject influence from every private source in a matter so important as this, upon which the best judgement would proceed inevitably from his own intellect—and his conscience.

Before confining myself to narration, I pick up the thread of my earlier remarks. More circumstantial news had been received about the movements of our army, which was

came a trifle late: Pius VII had passed through the Allied outposts on March 23. He was at Bologna on March 31, and at Imola on April 2. Cf. Mayol de Luppé, *La captivité de Pie VII*, 700.

thought to be virtually reassembled, willing, ready, and moving to the attack.[1] Consequently, troops already had been withdrawn from Paris to go up to the line. The grenadiers and the reserve were under marching orders.[2] All was movement and bustle; and the population, noticing the enemies' hurried activity, began to wake up. They issued, reserved and business-like, from their homes: and they were moved by something more than the mere curiosity which had drawn them to the march-past. Their numbers were surprising, their attitude gave food for thought. The Emperor Napoleon, so the word ran, had mustered his army last evening and had made them a rousing speech about Paris, treason, and the necessity for vengeance; and to-day he would hold a full review of the Guard.[3] It was known that he was speeding up the manoeuvres as a whole, and that all signs pointed to an imminent attack. And the Allied Generalissimo, informed of these particulars, was on the point of moving the last of his troops out of Paris.[4] He was doing all this as covertly as possible, however, for he was fearful lest the

[1] Napoleon's first act upon arriving at Fontainebleau was to station Marmont at Corbeil and Essonnes, with Mortier in line of reserve, whereafter he busied himself with the consolidating of the troops. On April 1 the three divisions of the Guard took station around Moret, Saint-Germain's corps at Melun, Defrance's at Saint-Germain-sur-Ecole, and the rest as far as Villeneuve-la-Guyard.

[2] The Silesians, taken over now by Barclay, spread out along the Paris-Orléans road. Their outposts lay from Montlhéry to Arpajon. Giulay's corps, and the Prince of Wurttemberg's, took station between Villeneuve-le-Roi and Athis. Bulow's corps was recalled from Soissons. Shortly afterwards, Schwarzenberg ordered the full force to be held in readiness for instant movement to the line Morangis-Juvisy. The Russian grenadiers thereupon left Paris, to take position at Rungis.

[3] This review, held in the Cheval-Blanc courtyard, did not take place until April 3. The reports to which Caulaincourt refers were therefore premature.

[4] "However, word spread that Napoleon, after having rallied his various army corps along the Essonne River, was making ready to march against Paris with fifty thousand men. The Sovereigns then took fright over the possible consequences of

Continued on next page

demands of strategy might chill the enthusiasm of the partisans of the "new order"—not to speak of the Senate, captious as it was, but primed to vote His Majesty's throne from under him. The Prefect of the Seine had had the City Council's resolution profusely placarded about.[1] These measures, however, did not rouse the ardour of the populace in the slightest degree. The Parisians had remained unresponsive to these issues, but they began to pay heed to developments as soon as the drums drew off towards Fontainebleau. The people, far from approving of what took place, were quiet merely because foreign bayonets prevented them from expressing disapproval.

As for the Tsar and the King of Prussia, they were anxious to save their troops from bloodshed and to avoid the further hazarding of a profitable peace which was wholly at their disposal. Consequently, and for their own best interest as well as for France's, the counsel of prudence bade them to delay the making of a decision that might lead to serious results. On the other hand, political foresight and immediate advantage made it advisable for the Tsar, who was at the helm of affairs, to choose a course which would guarantee him auxiliaries in Paris and set his mind at rest about the control of the city if he were forced to evacuate it in order to fight. Should there be a battle, the Tsar would have a strong reserve in the Provisional Government which he had founded —that is, he would if it could be maintained. Therefore, as I remarked above, the invaders had tried to induce the National Guard to assume the white cockade. Nesselrode had been commissioned to assemble the staff officers and sound their

accepting battle under the walls of the capital city. Out of prudence, they decided to evacuate Paris and draw off into position at Meaux. The order for this retreat was about to be sent to Count Barclay de Tolly when the Generalissimo prevented its despatch by reporting his negotiations with the Duke of Ragusa." (Koch, *Campagne de* 1814, II, 572.)

[1] See above, note 24. Chabrol had had the notices widely placarded, but Talleyrand, considering such zeal untimely, had them torn down and forbade their publication in the newspapers. Cf. Louis de Viel-Castel, *Histoire de la Restauration*, I, 217.

feelings. Everything would have seemed secure if this *démarche* had succeeded, for that corps would then have compromised itself so openly as to be beyond suspicion of a further change of heart. But M. Allent, the brigadier, though privately partial to Restoration, was too good a citizen not to oppose the suggested change, which might still prove embarrassing to so many of the best families. Besides, he sensed the difficulty of effecting that conversion from the Tricolour on short notice and at variance with the popular mood; and hence he perceived all the disadvantages of a rebuff that would rouse excitement and set up an opposition —a style of affairs which might perhaps alter the viewpoint of Their Majesties. It was even asserted that he refused this proposal for the very reason which, as he had surmised, lay behind the making of it at that moment.

Allent's expressed opinion was thoroughly borne out by that of the legionary chiefs, who were polled afterwards. It was seen that delay was the safest policy. As for the adjutants-in-command who constituted most of the headquarters-staff, they were wholly devoted to the royalist party; and heretofore, so it was stated, they had taken the lead in every question, even to the point of going to Bondy with the Prefects. The Provisional Government—finding, no doubt, that the name of Montmorency was not royalist enough—had provided the duke, who still held command of the National Guard, with a successor in the person of General Dessole;[1] but the latter had felt no immediate inclination to take over his duties.

Such was the momentary state of things at Paris. It was none too clearly understood what interpretation the Tsar would put upon this rebuff by the National Guard.[2] The

[1] Dessolle was appointed commander-in-chief of the National Guard by decree of April 2, but the order was not issued to the National Guard until April 4. He replaced Anne Charles-François, Duke of Montmorency, who had been appointed to that post by Napoleon on January 8, 1814.

[2] "The manner in which the Tsar of Russia received this decision to retain the tricolour cockade proved that as a matter of fact he would favour the unconstrained shifting of opinion." (Koch, *Campagne de* 1814, II, 539.)

Provisional Government, which had lent its weight to this measure, now felt the rejection of it all the more keenly because of the dread that Their Majesties might view the outcome solely as proof of a national opposition to the new régime. In a word, this rebuff gave a momentary set-back to many a scheme, and upset many an expectation. When the Tsar seemed neither offended nor dissatisfied, he was thought to be dissembling. Here, so the faction believed, was proof that his first judgement was confirmed: that the nation as a whole had no wish for the Bourbons' return. They were dismayed.

This rebuff, coming so apropos, made an impression on Alexander. It lent force to my remarks and to the scruples about our nation's real desires which lingered in that prince's better nature. The awkward trend of military developments did the rest; and now, in his anxiety to end his own predicament and to assure the pacification of France, failing which there was no tranquillity for Europe, the Tsar forwent the personal animus which at the outset had been his guide. He had long felt no partiality for the Bourbons. Now he appeared at the council and showed himself openly in favour of the Regency. It was said that the Prince of Benevento, promoter of the Restoration, was its sole defender, abetted by the Abbé de Montesquiou, Messieurs Dessole, de Pradt, and several more. They alone had any stomach for it; anything seemed preferable to the rest of them. The Duke of Dalberg and many another still tacitly favoured the Duke of Orléans. As for the Regency (which till then had looked most inviting), Talleyrand's remark that the Emperor would eavesdrop was passed around, and brought terror even to those who, secretly desiring the Regency, considered it the most logical choice and the only national party.

Talleyrand, taking advantage of this divided counsel, but playing more especially upon the uneasiness of the majority, set forth the advantages of a Restoration in whose favour many persons already had declared themselves, and which, besides the fact that Bordeaux had declared for the Bourbons, had at that moment, necessarily, all the western departments.

at its back. According to him, the Bourbons had roots on every side. They derived from all the ancient kings, whereas all other claimants were unattached, unfounded, carried no weight, and had royalty against them, and the men of the Empire, the Emperor himself, and the Regency. Of course, the Regency was an exceptional case; but he went on to say that it promised nothing but trouble and had nothing to offer but risks. "How could a faction survive that rallies no support?" he asked. "And as for the Regency, is it fair to its own interests to consider that as a possibility—with the Emperor living? Will he be content to stand aside?" According to Talleyrand, that way led straight to revolutions without end. His conclusion was that the Bourbons alone could reconcile all parties. Their past misfortunes, their present detachment from affairs—these, in his opinion, would guarantee the soundness of the principles they returned with, and likewise their moderation. They would be so anxious to smooth everything over that they could not help preserving the *status quo*. But the Regency with the Emperor living would be an unwise choice, as perilous to France as to Europe. And here, said he, was a point upon which the voice of Their Majesties' principles rang so loud and clear that nothing further need be said to scotch the Regency. As for the Bourbons, it struck him that their recall was a duty and their return a crying need. Common sense, policy, everything called for Restoration; and if those who were most opposed to this great measure would use their heads—if they would view the question, France's condition, and their own position from every side—they were bound to see that the return of the old dynasty was necessary, and was the very anchor of salvation. He spoke at great length, I was told, and with some heat; and if one could judge by what everybody said on the way out, he ended by silencing French opinion without uniting it. As for the Sovereigns, they were more concerned for their own interests than for ours, and, disposed though they might be in favour of the Bourbons, whose triumph they were seeking to bring about, the considerations which I have spoken of gave them pause. Observing, they listened.

The attentiveness of the Sovereigns, and notably the Tsar's readiness to hear all sides, had added sharply to the Provisional Government's uneasiness. For a moment, indeed, Talleyrand must have given his cause up for lost. Just then, however, General Dessolle began speaking in a pathetic strain not of France's interests but of the fate and sad lot of individual Frenchmen if the Regency were adopted. As Dessolle put it, he, like many another, had come out for Restoration solely because he took Their Majesties' proclamations in good faith, and only after they had expressly stated what their wishes were. For the sake of the Bourbon cause, he told them, he had sacrificed his habits, memories, interests, vows, his very affections and prejudices—everything for which he and his comrades-in-arms had battled during twenty-five years of a different social order. But now, if considerations that struck him as worthless forced Their Majesties to shift ground and approve the Regency, no recourse was left him except to demand passports for his comrades, his family, himself, and for everyone else who, following his example and taking the Tsar Alexander's word, had compromised themselves. Otherwise, nothing could protect them against the wrath of Napoleon, whose eventual return to power the Regency would assure. He expatiated upon the dangers with which the Emperor's ambition would leave the world still menaced, and upon the risks that so many persons would run because they had trusted Alexander's word.

Alexander was swayed by this discourse. It counteracted the counsels of policy and the resolution which, thanks to the exigencies of the moment, had virtually been arrived at. Thereupon the Tsar adjourned the council, leaving the question still undecided. Until the military situation had cleared up, he had no intention of coming out against the Regency and perhaps prolonging the war. Only a few of the most interested persons received the least inkling of what his real decision was.

Since the invaders had resolved once more to be guided by circumstances alone, the Provisional Government breathed easier than it had that morning. It made the most of every

moment, took advantage of its privileged position, extended its influence. Overtly and otherwise, it brought pressure to bear on the Parisian *familles* in an effort to win over the general officers of the army—the one remaining obstacle to Restoration. Feeling more at ease as to its fate, its prime concern was to strengthen these secret inclinations which it was all-important that the Tsar should hear imparted to him. The men of light and leading amongst the Senators whom Alexander had wished to consult, and who had remained in Paris, were besought to give him to understand that Restoration had become the general desire, a matter of instant national necessity, and the sole political scheme which could satisfy all future interests. General Dessolle was urged to take command of the National Guard in order to give the desired impulsion from that quarter, and the Paris Division was placed under the same command, the hope being that Dessolle's personal prestige and his association with his former comrades and with the soldiery at large would exercise a useful influence over them and prove attractive to many of their number. At the same time the Provisional Government promulgated an address to the army, releasing it from all duty whatsoever to the Emperor.[1] The same step had already been taken in regard to the citizenry of the departments.

I was waiting at the Tsar's for my farewell audience, and for the outcome of the council meeting at which the vast interests that had been confined to my care were to be ruled upon.[2] Despite the encouragement I had had from Alexander's closing remarks and from the predicament of the Allied forces, my anxiety can be imagined. It appeared to me that the Emperor's safety and our national independence were beyond question if only we could gain a decisive triumph in the field. Come what might, I could see no way for the Regency to slip from our grasp—not if the army, whose maintenance the Regency would assure, remained true to us. The Tsar had seemed so open-minded last evening, and I had

[1] Proclamation of April 2 to the Armies of France.

[2] Afternoon of April 2. Cf Thiers (XVII, 689), who utilized this part of the Caulaincourt Memoirs.

made out such a good case for our cause (backed as it was by the force of circumstances and the dictates of sound policy), that anyone else that might be named would perhaps have felt cocksure of victory. But with danger so imminent my misgivings would not down; I could not repress the uneasiness I felt for my Sovereign's safety and for the future of the dynasty whose advocate I was.

My recollections of the night before, my own thoughts, the combined interests that ought to tip the balance in my favour—in vain these counselled me to hope. Against me, and joining with circumstances to repel my hopes, were certain private interests inflamed as much by hatred, prejudices, and fear as by ambition. I felt uneasy despite myself. When the Tsar received me, his manner chilled and left me flat. He was edging away from a foregone conclusion: I read it in his glance. The words were the same, but now the tune had changed. I could not be mistaken there. He told me again that not a single Power was willing to treat with the Emperor Napoleon. Reverting to what the Senate and the City Council of Paris had done, he now lent the force of full legality to those acts, and he wanted to read the country's wishes into them. He added that only the Emperor's abdication could put a stop to the war and to the misfortunes that were weighing upon France. The Allies, he went on, were standing by the declaration they had made after the break-up of the congress, and by their proclamation upon entering the capital. With things at their present point, my staying in Paris could no longer be sanctioned; nor could he even so much as receive me and give me a hearing until such time as I had been authorized to negotiate on the basis aforesaid.

Of the acts which he mentioned, some excluded only the Emperor, others his family; and the last of them, as a matter of fact, was a mere statement by the Parisian authorities recalling the Bourbons. However, since it was the Tsar who had cited them, I asked him for a more definite explanation.

His reply left the matter of exclusion applicable, as yet, to the Emperor alone. Apart from that, he limited himself to

reviewing the Senate's whole course of action as though it were the means to a prompt conclusion and the pacification of Europe, rather than a *sine qua non* which the Sovereigns would care to enforce.

He repeated over and over that the Allies were amenable to anything once the Emperor was out of the discussion. First let him abdicate: they would not consent to deal with him sooner. They were ready to listen to everything, and even to make every concession, if the Emperor had no share in France's case. Any government that shut him out would be acceptable.

I spoke of the King of Rome. The answer was, "Whatever you please, as long as the Emperor is far away, where he can neither influence Europe nor disturb the peace." And then the Tsar went on to say that no government or ruler would be forced upon France without her consent; her territorial integrity was guaranteed by all the Powers of Europe. I asked him what "integrity" meant in this sense. "The peace which is to come," he told me, "and which will make France one of the most powerful monarchies of Europe, thanks to her situation, her compactness, and the density of her population."

I was not backward in pointing out how real, on every possible count, would be the inferiority in which we should thus be placed, in view of the enormous gains that the other Powers were making. I enumerated those gains. Therefore, I remarked, France stood to gain nothing by deserting the Emperor. On the contrary, such considerations were admirably calculated to make France realize that in all likelihood none but the Emperor could get better terms for her, thus insuring her safety. Moreover, any such peace would win him partisans enough to outnumber the enemies that the present war had won him; any such proposals would make clear to everybody that we had but one recourse left us—namely, to fight. I added that perhaps before long the Allies would regret their failure to accept the peace which, in the Emperor's name, I was offering even now; that I could not refrain from repeating to him that by his refusal he was letting

Europe and France go by the board for the sake of a conspiracy. . . . The Tsar took no exception to that term; he replied that, were the Emperor included in the question, far different sacrifices and guarantees would be demanded of France. All my efforts to elicit more precise data about what they had in view, and to discover the Tsar's opinion on the Regency, led that prince to give me only such responses as the following. Since Europe, so he told me, held no grudge against France, there would be quick agreement over what it might be to her interest to gain or keep—once the Emperor was out of the question. As for himself, he was willing that France should be no less powerful than happy. He coveted nothing that was hers, and, regardless of past losses, Russia demanded nothing.

From these vague promises couched in such general terms, it was plain to be seen that opportunism alone would decide whatever conditions they imposed on France; that for the time being the Emperor's removal was all they would think of. France and Napoleon: sunder those two great issues, and they could count on settling with both at their own price.

As for the Emperor Napoleon, the Tsar added, he would do his best to see him provided with a suitable and independent establishment. Here was a point on which he would give me the most absolute assurance. Moreover, he would make himself personally responsible for the army's interests. And thus it appeared how self-confident the Allies had become since the start of this sorry business. Trusting in circumstance and the support of treachery, they presented our Emperor now with a place of refuge as though it were a favour, and offered a speck of earth away at the corner of the world to the sovereign who had been Europe's law-giver of late, and who had refused, ten days ago, to be content with the limits of Old France. Returning in vain to the attack, I tried to break through to the Tsar's feelings in the Regency matter; he always answered that nothing would be forced upon France. Quite definitely, then it was clear that the Emperor was excluded, but that, since considerable caution was still thought necessary, he was leaving the door open (despite his strong

stand, earlier, for Restoration) to all the remaining claimants, and therefore to the Regency, for the sake of profiting little by little from circumstances as the situation developed, and of admitting, at the last, only that which was agreeable to the Coalition and its adherents. As for the lot in store for the Emperor: while refuting all thought of his abdication as an affront to our honour, contrary to our interests, and therefore inadmissible, our situation was already so ticklish that I sought for some elaboration upon what the Tsar understood to be the sense of the words "a proper settlement."

How am I to sum up a conversation such as this, in which I was anxious to give no offence and thus learn what I could, meanwhile avoiding the slightest admission that we might be forced to accept so stern an ultimatum? You must bear in mind the surroundings—not to mention Alexander's imperial rank, which compelled me to receive in humble confidence the expression of vague hopes based on the supposition of calamities yet to come. The Tsar's object was to tell me little, and mine to learn much.

Alexander then offered anything that might be asked in the way of revenue and cash indemnity for the Emperor, but no domicile in France or Italy, nor on the Continent. Apparently the desire was that he should go overseas or else settle down in Austria, or in Russia if he cared to live there. The Emperor's presence anywhere else on the Continent, especially if near France or Italy, seemed a risky matter. "If he comes to Russia," the Tsar told me, "I shall treat him as a Sovereign. Beyond that I have nothing in mind, for I would not make him mistrustful. If he confides himself to my care, he will perhaps discover more readily in Russia than anywhere else what influence a great man's misfortunes and character can have with me. He treated me badly; but the harm he has done to himself balances all the harm he has done to Europe. The precautions we take are demanded by our people's welfare; but even if my religion did not forbid me to bear malice, you may be sure that I shall feel none on the day when everything is settled, and that you will find me fully as concerned for his happiness as once you saw me interested in

what his true glory might have been. I open the doors to you: choose."

The exceptions led necessarily to talk of what was not included under them. The Tsar wished his enemy to be so situated that he would have no further political influence. England, according to him, would sanction whatever arrangements one might desire—provided that the Emperor was far away from the Continent. I ruled out all thought of residence in the colonies, climate being my objection. Italy, I suggested, was the sole proposal that could be made, assuming that the Emperor were to resign himself for his son's sake to the sacrifice which they desired, but to which, said I, it was disadvantageous for France and the troops to consent. However, when this idea was heatedly ruled out on the score that it gave the Emperor a living and a status which would put him in a position to regain everything, and which, thanks to this proximity, would rouse fresh anxieties in Europe, I confined myself to letting it be known that nobody could offer a trifling recompense for so great a sacrifice if there were any desire to have the offer accepted. Before all else, I told the Tsar, the Emperor's health and the state he had been in during the past few years required a mild climate. . . .

Compelled though I was to refute this proposal in order that they might think themselves the less able to force it upon us, I had simultaneously to declare my intention of taking advantage of it in case it should prove our lone and final recourse. Therefore I made every effort to get on with the conversation as though it were merely a private chat. This, however, was the device that led Alexander to mention the Island of Elba—and there was the remark which I built up into a formal offer, a sacred promise which was to be the saving of the Emperor before long, when the consequences of treachery and desertion were to leave him at the mercy of his foes, and were to make it possible for them to debate whether or not a rock in the midst of European waters should be allotted to the man who, for the sake of that tranquillity which France seemingly desired, was sacrificing the first of European thrones.

By designating one particular spot, the Tsar put me in a position to name some others. I spoke of Corsica, Sardinia, Corfu, if His Majesty were not allowed a residence on the Continent; but each of those establishments, seemingly, was a State rather than a place of refuge. It was easy for me to see that the intention was to grant nominal independence but no real dominion. Since I was neither able nor willing formally to accept or refuse, I went but lightly into the nature of the offers. I sought primarily to add to the number of them and to fathom the Tsar's intentions, my purpose being to discover how much leeway I could allow for my hopes in respect of that independence which my unhappy master would be left free to enjoy.

The fact remains that it was to this overture that the Emperor afterwards owed the sovereignty of the Island of Elba, which never would have been his if the Tsar had not stood staunchly by his word, despite remonstrances and opposition from many governments and numerous Frenchmen.

As he dismissed me, he said: "If the Emperor Napoleon abdicates and charges you with a reply, come back. I will have you provided with a passport so that the outposts will let you through at sight. Take my advice; induce him to make up his mind, persuade him not reject my offers. I am a better friend of his than he thinks I am—and I most certainly am yours, for I like men who are faithful to their trust."

Prince Schwarzenberg, upon whom I had called a moment before, had been even more outspoken than the Tsar. He had refused point-blank to intervene for me on behalf of the Regency. Austria's views, he declared, were strictly impersonal. She would abide by every decision of her allies, every act of the Tsar's; and it was to Alexander, accordingly, that I ought to sue, since Austria had definitely decided that she would no longer lend her weight to a family issue in a matter which concerned the whole of Europe, and which therefore was to be decided by all the Sovereigns and by the suffrages of France, upon whom nobody intended to force anything: set phrases, these.

So then I lost all hope of seeing my negotiations take root

if perchance we were compelled to wait for the sealing of our doom at Their Majesties' pleasure. And considering the pass to which our affairs had come, what further hope could I cherish unless a great battle, with the hazard of good fortune, were to win us friends? This declaration—this desertion by the spokesman of the sole Power to whose interest it was to second my *démarche*—accounted all too well with the Tsar's self-assurance in telling me that the Emperor of Austria was at least as outspoken as his allies, and that there would be no negotiations with the Emperor Napoleon upon any grounds whatsoever. That was what crushed me. The members of the Generalissimo's entourage were as wary as he was. Several of them shunned me, out of embarrassment over the minor part that Austria was playing and the fact that she was deserting her own Blood Royal. Not one word of concern, not so much as the accent of it had I found, except from the mouth of the man who claimed to be sentencing us beyond appeal. Everything added up to prove how right I had been last night, when I wrote to the Emperor: "Not one friendly face did I see; Sire, let courage alone be your guide." Alas! that sorrowful observation and that advice were only too pertinent to the circumstances, and to the wholesale desertion which had beset his cause and France's both. We had come to April 2, the surrender of Paris had been concluded on March 30—and there was no news whatever, so it was said, of the Emperor of Austria and his Minister. Whether true or not, this proved that Metternich had made his decision, as Schwarzenberg said he had, and that the Emperor Francis would come to Paris only at the latest possible moment. A remnant of human decency prevented the father from coming in person to attend the funeral of his son-in-law's rights, and his grandson's, and his daughter's.

Schwarzenberg once more repeated to me some of the strictures which he felt qualified to level at the Emperor for the non-conclusion of the Lusigny armistice, which seemed to weigh on the prince's mind: "His refusal, his stubbornness, his letter to his father-in-law, and the Prince of Neuchâtel's letter—they are what caused his downfall, for they are what

proved to the Emperor of Austria, who until then would not believe it, that there was no way of bringing him back to reasonable ideas, and that he would never give up his plans until he had not a man left for the defence of his ambitious dreams." Even so, I procured the despatch of a courier to give the Emperor of Austria a report of all that I had told the prince, and of what was taking place. "But that will make no difference," he told me; "I repeat to you beforehand: we have made this decision only as the last resort; nothing can change it now; we have shown consideration for you long enough; our duty is to our allies; the Emperor Napoleon asked for it—we have told him enough, and have had enough out of him. I am sorry for France—and for you, too. As for the Emperor, he has brought on his own misfortune; he can blame it on no one but himself. As for the Empress, her father loves her and we pity her, but the interest of Europe and our own repose must take precedence of her."

In short, the animus which he displayed and his outspokenness against the Emperor were as great as at our former meetings. It was plain to be seen how distasteful this rôle was to a man by nature noble and magnanimous; plain, too, that he realized, as I took occasion to point out, that Metternich was leaving him to bear all the odium of Austria's desertion of her Blood Royal, for negotiations such as these lay rather in a minister's province than in a field-commander's. But the Coalition would have been very loath, at that moment, to surrender the Emperor of Austria to the contact of our misfortunes and the sway of his personal feelings. The Coalition, while keeping him far from the scene of this drama, took care to surround him with sundry champions of the new order which it was their intention to establish. Metternich and Lord Castlereagh did not leave his side.

CHAPTER IV

At Fontainebleau: The Abdication in Favour of the King of Rome

IT was evening when I arrived at Fontainebleau.[1] Everybody searched my looks for a hint of the lot in store for us. The course of events in Paris was common knowledge; and my silence could scarcely relieve the general preoccupation nor be interpreted as a favourable sign. Immediately, I had a long and painful conversation with the Emperor, who recalled me twice, so that I was with him most of the night.[2] I went into the minutest detail, submitting even my slightest observations. He had received my letters; and from Colonel Fabvier, and from other reports as well, he had learned all that occurred when the Allies came in. He knew what had happened thereafter. Colonel Fabvier had reached Essonnes at the moment when the Emperor, who had gone there to inspect the position, was giving orders for various defence-works.[3] Fabvier had seen the Allied declaration: Bourrienne had been kind enough to show it to him just as he was entering the Tsar's headquarters to straighten out a hitch that had occurred in the course of the surrender. Bourrienne had gone so far as to get his promise that he would carry word of the declaration, and had taken care to repeat to him that there would be no more dealings with Bonaparte. The Emperor

[1] April 2, 1814. Caulaincourt had left Paris at a little before 7 p.m., when the Senate was about to vote Napoleon's dethronement. (Talleyrand, *Mémoires*, II, 164.)

[2] Napoleon, upon his arrival at Fontainebleau at 6 a.m., March 31, had taken up his quarters on the first floor, in the small apartments giving on to the Gallery of Francis I.

[3] The Emperor had gone to Essonnes during the afternoon of April 1, to inspect the corps positions of Marmont and Mortier.

had all of this from Fabvier; and he even knew many particulars about Paris and about what had happened in the Senate, in the city, at the Place Vendôme, et cetera, all of which he told me and I let pass. However, I postpone the account of our lengthy conversations in order to furnish some particulars about what had taken place in Paris, and about the subterfuges of individuals at the head of the government who had in view the shaking of the army's loyalty, and its leaders'—details which we still were ignorant of, but which properly belong here, both by way of accounting for later developments and for the sake of proper chronology. As to their precision, a trustworthy participant has put them in writing for me.

Colonel Montessuy, the Duke of Ragusa's erstwhile aide-de-camp, had come to Essonnes the night before, asking for a parley; and the marshal had received him cordially.[1] His attire, which lent an air of mystery to his errand, had naturally put ideas into everyone's head.[2] It had developed that he came bearing letters from General Beurnonville to various marshals; and according to certain persons, he brought a message from General Dessolle for the Duke of Ragusa. He came provided, too, with all the newspapers and pamphlets, and with the proclamations and declarations issued by Their

[1] Charles de Montessuy had gone with Marmont to Egypt. After being with him for six years, he had left the service and gone into trade. Beginning on April 2, the Provisional Government sent Marmont a variety of documents, amongst them Schwarzenberg's proclamation, Alexander's declaration, and the address to the troops. Marmont passed those documents along to Berthier. On that same day, however, Montessuy, by arrangement of Baron Louis and Roux de Laborie, received verbal instructions for an errand to Essonnes. The declaration of dethronement was given to him that evening, and also a letter from Schwarzenberg to Marmont, published in Rapetti, *La Défection de Marmont en* 1814 (Paris, 1858), 137. Montessuy did not reach the Duke of Ragusa's headquarters until April 3, towards noon.

[2] "The better to avert suspicion . . . it had seemed advisable to have him dress as a Cossack: he even carried the sort of whip known as knout." (Pasquier, *Mémoires*, II, 291.)

Majesties against the Emperor.[1] It appeared that the marshal —so shocked was he—left those screeds all day at the disposal of the curious; that such carelessness was far from his wont; and that he had a long private conference with Montessuy, who, it was said, brought all sorts of overtures from the Prince of Benevento. The marshal had sent for his divisional commanders: Souham, Bourdessoulle, and Compans.[2] Report has it that after a long conference, begun in his study and carried out on the lawn, he left them and rejoined Colonel Fabvier (then recently returned from Paris), and that, after plying him with questions as to what had happened, he regaled him with the news which Montessuy had just brought him from the capital, with his letter from General Beurnonville, with the invitation which he had received to come out for peace—and all this by way of asking Fabvier's opinion, instead of sending him on to the Emperor with the details. Fabvier countered by asking if the other marshals had received proposals of like sort. After answering yes, and adding that he was commissioned to pass the word along and to send a letter to the Duke of Taranto, Ragusa was moved to go at great length into what had been told him about the existing situation, and so, finally, into the misfortunes imperilling France, and the necessity of saving her from the extremes to which the Emperor's obstinacy had pushed matters.

Being full of his subject, he paid scant attention to Colonel Fabvier's remarks, but went on enlarging upon his own

[1] There was also Schwarzenberg's letter to Marmont, reading: "I have the honour to pass along to Y. E. by a sure hand the papers and documents requisite to acquaint Y. E. with the events which have taken place since you left the capital, as well as an invitation from the Provisional Government for you to place yourself under the colours of France's rightful cause." (Rapetti, *La Défection de Marmont*, 131.)

[2] Souham commanded the Second Paris division of reserve, and Bordessoulle the division of heavy cavalry. Campans headed a pick-up corps formed from the Ledru-Desessarts, Boyer de Rebeval, and Chastel divisions, which had been put under Ragusa's orders during the battle of Paris and was stationed on the Essonne River near the Sixth Corps. (Koch, *Campagne de* 1814, II, 566.)

comments and conjectures about the course of events. And so he continued until the very instant when, having made up his mind, no doubt, to pass along the overtures which he had received, he decided to call for his aide-de-camp, Captain Martin, whom he ordered to deliver to the Duke of Taranto the letter recently brought in for him from General Beurnonville; and to this he added all the garnered details about what was happening in Paris.[1] After sending that officer on his way, the marshal rejoined his generals of division and went again into conference with them. It was after this new conference that he despatched Denys, one of his aides, to Prince Schwarzenberg.[2] In all likelihood, that marked the overture to the fatal agrément which filled the measure of our misfortunes to overflowing and set seal, as far as the Marshal-Duke of Ragusa was concerned, to the most inexplicable act in the life of so distinguished a soldier. At any rate, the desertion of the Sixth Corps followed upon that act; and by that desertion France received the crowning stroke amidst her disasters, the soldiery felt its uniform disgraced, and the Emperor's hand was bitten by the mouth it fed. . . . These details—I have them from Colonel Fabvier—are inserted at this point because it is necessary to draw attention simultaneously to events in Paris and the machinations there, to the sort of conduct that went on at Essonnes, to the communications received by the marshals and generals, and to the fact that already they were keeping the Emperor in the dark.

[1] Cf. Macdonald, *Souvenirs*, 264. This letter was delivered unsealed to Macdonald when he reached Fontainebleau, April 4.

[2] Marmont's reply to Schwarzenberg, dated April 3, was carried by Denys de Damrémont and is published in Rovigo, *Mémoires*, IV, 432, and in Rapetti, *La Défection de Marmont*, 138. In his letter, Marmont said: "I am inclined to co-operate in a *rapprochement* between the civil and the military, to the end that all risk of civil war may be prevented and a step put to the shedding of French blood. Consequently, I am ready to leave the Emperor Napoleon's army, taking my troops with me." There followed the draft of a two-part agreement under which the Allied Generalissimo should guarantee French troops the right of free withdrawal into Normandy.

Nothing whatever was known at Fontainebleau about this admitting of truce-bearers and of correspondence, and, as will presently be seen, Marmont was the last man, unfortunately, whom the Emperor would ever have felt occasion to suspect, for he cited him to me as the man in whom he put his chief reliance—the child born in his camp, raised and trained under his own eye—the general whose devotion he could count on as between father and son.

Before turning back to the Emperor's conversation upon my arrival at Fontainebleau, I must report one further circumstance which had considerable bearing on events then current in Paris—but especially on the Tsar's display, just at that time, of less animosity towards the Emperor. The night before I returned to Fontainebleau, the Emperor had held great council. He had called in the Duke of Bassano and such of the marshals as could conveniently absent themselves from their respective corps, the question being whether it was more advantageous to manoeuvre around Paris or to fall back along the Loire.[1] Report had it that all but one of those there present favoured the latter course. The Emperor, however, ruled contrariwise. He preferred, and with good reason, to attack the foe whilst they were compelled either to weaken themselves by patrolling Paris in force or else run the risk of having that vast populace at their heels, when, at the sound of our cannonade, a weak garrison could no longer hold it back. When word of this decision reached Paris, it was the factor which caused alarm there, led to the hasty despatching of troops, and made the Allies less exigent in their demands.

I revert to my conversation with the Emperor upon my arrival and during the night. Since I had noted down in due order all that had been told me by the Tsar and Prince Schwarzenberg (and by Talleyrand also, in my two interviews with him)[2] I gave His Majesty a most accurate account, to which

[1] Cf. Koch, *Campagne de* 1814, II, 567.

[2] If one were to trust the *Mémoires* of Talleyrand (II, 166) at this point, the Prince of Benevento must have been present at the start of Caulaincourt's final discussion with Alexander, April 2, p.m.

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I added everything that I knew about the latest events, and everything, too, that might be taken for granted after the support which the intrigues in Paris had received from Their Majesties.

The Emperor listened unmoved. One would have thought that all these happenings, this treachery and peril, did not concern him in the least. As I had seen him in his days of glory and success, so he seemed to me now in the time of adversity.

"The throne means nothing to me," was his opening remark. "I was born a soldier: I can return to civil life without repining. My desire was to see France great and powerful, but before all else I wish her to be happy. I would rather quit the throne than sign a shameful peace. I am very much pleased that your terms were not accepted, for I should have been obliged to subscribe to them, and France and history would have censured me for that feeble act. Only Bourbons could possibly agree to peace dictated by Cossacks. Talleyrand is right: they alone could bring themselves to accept the humiliation which France is under, for they have nothing to lose. They find her just as they left her—wherefore they suit Alexander's book. They will not prevent his domineering over Europe. It was Talleyrand who put that idea in Their Majesties' heads some while ago, but the day is coming when France will despise him, though perhaps not so much for betraying me as for having plotted and been party to the pillage of his country for the profit of foreigners.

"The Austrians are what I have always thought them, dull and timid. When the ascendancy was mine, they came begging me to marry an arch-duchess. They assured

As therein stated, the Duke of Vicenza, upon learning that Talleyrand was on his way to the Senate to push through the Act of Dethronement, threatened to put in his appearance there also, as champion of the Imperial cause. "You did well to warn me," said Talleyrand; "I shall order you held at my lodgings until my return." Caulaincourt's reply was: "If it had been my real intention to go there, I would have taken good care not to warn you. I see only too clearly that there is no means of saving him, since all of you are against me."

Narbonne then that they were offering me the apple of their Emperor's eye—his heart's darling, so they told Berthier.[1] And to-day, when she is unfortunate, they abandon her. But make no mistake about it, Caulaincourt: though her father, like Schwarzenberg, is doubtless afraid of me and would like nothing better than to put me in irons, he is unwilling to dethrone his dear daughter and his grandson. He knows that it is not safe to separate a wife from her husband. In this instance his religious principles, his set notions on certain subjects, will make him break through the web of Metternich's intrigues. Once he learns what is afoot, he will perceive that matters are being pushed too far. Besides, it is not to Austria's advantage to have me dethroned. Metternich might consent to it; he is England's paid hireling, swayed by Talleyrand, subservient to the Viennese oligarchy which really governs Austria, of course. But at bottom the Emperor's whole immediate circle will be against it, save possibly Schwarzenberg, who is compromised now and has let fright and Alexander's influence get the better of him. Schwarzenberg, like the Viennese nobility, unquestionably shares all the prejudices of our old-time *émigrés*. The people, the interests of nations—these mean nothing to them. Divine right, diffusing feudal rights around it—that touches them where they live because their hope is to regain everything which royal authority and the spirit of the age have subtracted from the prestige of hereditary distinction. Behold what arouses and sets them against me. The oligarchs dread me because I am the peoples' king. It is not to Austria's interest to turn Europe over to the sway of Russia, which is what would happen if France were to lose me and consequently her influence: my father-in-law will perhaps moderate the trend of things, even yet.

"Anyway, how blind men are! Hatred is their guide to-day. Amidst the present furore, reason and policy can no longer get a hearing. The kings overlook the fact that I am their strongest guarantee; the nobles do not see that the

[1] Berthier had been the Imperial representative at Vienna at the time of Napoleon's marriage by proxy to Marie Louise.

social distinctions as I have drawn them, and such as I wished to establish through the peerage and the rounding-out of my institutions, are the only distinctions compatible with the spirit of the age—yet that is what everybody will be obliged to conform to. The nobility would have lost nothing in the way of consideration and influence, since it still would have had what it is so jealous of—honour and preferment. With society in its present state, hereditary distinction—superiority of every kind, even though it carry no real privilege—needs to be better tuned to the temper of the times than does any other part of the social order, now that all distinction whatsoever, even when acquired by merit and bravery, offends and grates upon the self-esteem of numerous persons who in former days had no such *amour-propre* because they asserted no claims to respect. Hereditary distinction is more offensive than any other."

The Emperor went into some details concerning the prejudices and the opposition which he had had to overcome on that score even when founding the Legion of Honour, which brought all merit down to level; prejudices which he had met with again later on, when creating his nobility. He chatted about all these topics as calmly as one would do when discussing other people's affairs under everyday circumstances.

"The Tsar Alexander," he added, "is the most reasonable of this whole coterie. He also has the most brains. Despite all the harm we have done each other, he may possibly be the most generous, too. By nature, though, he is very much a Greek. He thought politics a business of sentiment. He used me with a great deal of flattery. I am all politics myself; as soon as the issues changed, we could no longer understand one another; what with his shilly-shallying, we should never have done. The Spanish business made all the difference. If he had insisted upon the evacuation of the Oder fortifications, perhaps we should never have fallen out; for I could not dream of Polish re-establishment, which was the pretext given —not after Austria had come into my System. Seeing that I did not march on Petersburg or Moscow after Friedland, it was necessary to leave the Russians undisturbed from then on,

in view of my having kept Prussia. Alexander holds an old grudge against me. You should know that, for he loved to recount his grievances to Lauriston and you."

Turning abruptly from this subject, the Emperor talked to me about his plans. Apparently, he still felt that he could bend Fortune to his will and change the course of events by marching against the enemy and attacking them in the shadow of Paris. The men, the officers, and many of the generals inspired him with every confidence, and he had no doubt of success or of what its consequences would be—if he were seconded. On the other hand, though, he had received information about the way some of the army chiefs already were talking, and about their attitude—the inevitable consequences, these, of contact with the Parisian *familles* and of certain persons' intrigues. And this, reasonably enough, gave him pause.

That afternoon [April 3] I personally found good proof, in all that was loudly repeated by the Emperor's *entourage*, that what he said was true. There were many who were quite ready to fight, to stage a great battle for glory's sake—but far away from Paris. As if the choice of terrain were at the Emperor's discretion; as if it were not far more advantageous to attack the enemy whilst that huge populace lay at their backs! The Emperor, so ran the word, wishes to attack the foe at Paris in order to take vengeance for the behaviour of certain Parisians. There must be no fighting there: that would involve that great city. Our wives are there—our children and our friends. Who knows how far a soldier's fury will carry him? Everything must be done, of course, to preserve France's independence and the Emperor's power, and to save his dynasty. But civil war—no!

The Emperor was aware of this attitude and these utterances, but thought nothing of them. Encouraged by the weakness of the enemy's position and sure of his personal ascendancy over the troops, he was laying all his plans for battle and victory. He was fully aware that circumstances had revived the eagerness, long since apparent, for peace at any price, and that that was what everyone needed and longed for. He knew

that there were many who did not hesitate to say as much; that through fear lest the temperateness of his present ideas might not prove lasting, the possibility of triumph was, so to speak, being played down. However, he remarked that the need of rest had thus far overtaken only the senior officers of the army: "And they," said he, "will do once more for honour's sake what the commissioned officers and the men will do out of devotion. Nobody quits the cause on the eve of battle. But there is no time to lose—and it will be forty-eight hours before I am ready."

After listening to certain persons, happily few in number, one might have said that we ought to fear something worse than the sight of the enemy occupying our capital. The Emperor, who thought to rally opinion and sustain morale by speaking wrathfully (as was natural enough) about the behaviour of the Parisians, the treachery of certain Frenchmen, the invaders' presumption, and the need for avenging all this, had doubtless done what he could to convince a lot of worthy fellows that the movement against the capital was merely a vengeful scheme. So great was the general respect for him, however, that everybody at Fontainebleau would necessarily have obeyed. They all came to me, tried to guess at what I left unsaid, and sought to go behind the reports which were only too quick in spreading. For all the news, being so obligingly displayed on the Duke of Ragusa's table at Essonnes, reached Fontainebleau—nor did it stop there.[1] I made no attempt to conceal from His Majesty that time was pressing, that the army was played out, and that he must give battle within the day if he could possibly do so, or else fall back upon the Loire. Otherwise he would have to take the victors' orders and abdicate. In my opinion and for his own good, I told him, there was not a moment to waste; the army's contact with Paris was working on it like the plague: he must reach his decision that very hour.

[1] "April 3.—The hours drag. There is great commotion within. Soon the courtiers appear: their faces look glum, especially the Duke of Vicenza's." (Rapetti, *La Défection de Marmont*, 338: General Pelet's account.)

"I shall make no battle for a crown," he replied; "I cling to mine no longer. Their Majesties may bank on the spread of ingratitude, no doubt—but there are all too many ingrates here. They are so eager for a new reign that I do not care to keep the throne. We shall fight for the honour of France, to prove that Frenchmen were not born to take orders from Cossacks."

In spite of his secret anger and the indignation which he must naturally have felt after what had taken place in Paris, he spoke (barring a few moments of petulance) so calmly and impartially both of those events and of certain individuals as to seem almost indifferent to them. It struck him as perfectly natural for Talleyrand to side against him: "I abused him. This is fair revenge. After all the reproach I had heaped on him, I was wrong in not bringing him to judgement on the eve of my departure. There was room for an example! It was wrong of me to give him time for his revenge. If he succeeds in restoring the Bourbons, they will pay him off for me some fine day. How can he expect pardon for having officiated at the Champ-de-Mars and for his persecution of them?"

The discussion was interrupted throughout by remarks foreign to the matter at hand. To hear him, you would have said that there was no hurry, and that he was serene in his salon at the Tuileries under everyday circumstances.

"The Duchess of Bassano's intrigues and his hatred of her husband are what have driven Talleyrand to extremes, for he does not hate me personally. He knows that I am more capable of ruling than all the rest of them put together; that under me there is power and credit, that I never repudiate anybody, and that therefore he could get back into office. But the speed of events may have dazzled his foresight. . . . Trust him to see that the Bourbons would prove to be an unavoidable concession, imposed sooner or later by the force of circumstances, if I were no longer there. He would then wish to get the credit for their recall. A period of transition seemed to him a blunder, an unnecessary hardship. His logic was sound. If I fall or if I triumph, he cannot remain in

France. So now he fastens on to the Bourbons again, covering up the disgrace of his betrayal of me with rewards from those whom he dethroned twenty years before. Behold what revolutions are, and look what an advantage a man of that stamp has. Talleyrand is like a cat—he can always manage to fall on his feet. History will find the proper verdict, though.

"The Bourbons," he said after a moment's thought, "could have had no part in his cabal. Surely he had some other scheme. Alexander's animosity towards me doubtless helped and supported that faction; that must have been decisive for him. Weren't all of Nesselrode's friends in the Faubourg Saint-Germain? Alexander shows little enough appreciation for the way I played fair with him in Russia. If I had proclaimed Poland's independence and freed the Russian serfs, as I could have done and was urged to do, he would not be in Paris. But that would have left the world upset for a long time, and every government unsafe for half a century. . . . I have waged honest war on my enemies and I do not regret it, though they treated me otherwise. They stir up treason and turn France in revolt against me, when it was I who made the people reconciled to kings and restored respect for the power of sovereignty by closing the abyss of revolution. I could have dethroned the King of Prussia, yet I sacrificed my political advantage out of respect for royalty—because of Alexander's friendship for him. I could have dethroned my father-in-law and made Hungary independent—and now he deserts his daughter and his grandson. . . . The burning of Moscow would have justified me before the world for the freeing of Alexander's serfs—yet I did no such thing. I behaved towards Their Majesties as a sovereign should: they behave towards me like so many Jacobins. See how my magnanimity is rewarded! Their conduct towards me differs very little from the British Ministry's, which hires assassins to put me out of its way. They will stoop to anything.

"The day is coming when Alexander will repent of his spitefulness and his compliance with England's wishes. That is all the consequence of a long-standing conspiracy, as we

shall presently find out. Two months ago, when I told Savary that an intrigue was brewing, he would not believe me because the clue had not been uncovered by the police agents.[1] I am certain that Talleyrand wanted the Regency that long ago. That form of government suited him and therefore Metternich, who has always been his man.

"You may be sure that Talleyrand had his lines laid long ago for the event of my death at the front. Seeing that bullets are accustomed to respect me, he tried to act as though I were no longer there. That certainly is why he wished to make Marie Louise remain in Paris; he would have used her as his tool and safeguard. Talleyrand would have procured the Empress's agreement to whatever suited his scheme; but my instructions forestalled his doing it, even though Savary and the whole Cabinet, except Clarke, were taken in.[2] They hurried to get out of Paris, whereas they should have been the last to go. Pasquier is the only one who behaved properly[3] It takes courage for a man to declare his stand while the issue is still uncertain: he earns absolution through the chance he runs that events may not sustain him. The man who serves warning is no traitor. I thought well of Pasquier, and I am pleased that his conduct has justified my regard.

"As for the Prefect of the Seine, he is a wretched scoundrel. I loaded him and his family with honours. Frenchmen will curse the name of Frochot in days to come: his relations already blush at it. And Beurnonville—there is a sharper for you, a ne'er-do-well who always has something up his sleeve. He is the same man who came to me at Saint-Cloud, on the

[1] Cf. Rovigo, *Mémoires*, IV. 324.

[2] At the meeting of the Regency Council on March 28, when the Empress's departure was decided upon, the Duke of Feltre was at first the sole advocate of that move.

[3] Baron Pasquier, Prefect of Police, had been insistent with the Minister, Rovigo, urging that the government be kept in Paris. Here Talleyrand's comment was: "I should never have believed that M. Pasquier would be so hostile to the House of Bourbon; he advised doing precisely what would have been most prejudicial to it." (Pasquier, *Mémoires*, II, 218. Cf. also Chap. III prec., n. 17 *et sup.*)

day of Brumaire, with the proposal that he should lie in ambush on the Paris road to kill whatever Deputies escaped from the Orangerie. It was a critical moment. His suggestion made me shudder; I had him stay where I could keep an eye on him for fear he might do that dastardly act in order to show his zeal. . . . He is the only Frenchman who ever made me any such proposal. Talleyrand wanted a human cipher: he has found it, but it is likewise a vicious brute and therefore a bad choice."

The Emperor questioned me in detail about the National Guard. General Dessolle's appointment, with General Ricard as second-in-command, gave him no surprise. "Dessolle," he said, "is a good fellow; they have chosen him because of his friendship with Moreau. The Tsar Alexander has been pleased to make a traitor of the chief-of-staff of the Army of the Rhine, just as he did of its commander. I am displeased that Dessolle should have smirched a fine reputation. He had no reason to do so, for he served me well despite his constant tacking, so to speak, with the opposition; and I never gave him anything but fair treatment."

Reverting then to what he supposed were his father-in-law's feelings, he told me that he was going to write to him, and he asked me for a trusty attaché of the Foreign Office to carry his letter. The Empress, meanwhile, would write to her father on her own account, and would send the Duke of Cadore to him. He despatched M. de Saint-Mars to the Emperor of Austria with a letter informing him of his readiness to make peace, even at the cost of the greatest sacrifices.

The Empress, to whom he already had written in similar vein, sent off the Duke of Cadore on her own account; but those were fruitless errands.[1]

[1] Marie Louise's letter to her father is published in part by Frederic Masson *L'Imperatrice Marie-Louise*, 561. Champagny, who had been ambassador to Vienna, where Francis had stood godfather to one of his sons, left Blois on April 6, joined the Emperor of Austria at Chanceaux near Dijon, and returned on April 10 to the Empress at Orléans. (Méneval, *Mémoires*, III, 264; and cf. also Charles Dupuis, *Le Ministère de Talleyrand en 1814*, I, 244.)

Once again the Emperor complained bitterly of the Minister of War, of the sort of provision he had made for the defence of Paris, and of his small show of energy. According to him, the city had gone undefended. After these last remarks, and some further complaining which was only too well justified, the Emperor was absorbed for several minutes in his bitter reflections. Breaking the silence, he said merely that he was resolved to fight; he would have attacked to-day if the troops had come up, but Macdonald's corps could not take position until to-morrow afternoon: he would have to gain time. He added that there would be a response of some kind to the overtures which he and the Empress were making to the Emperor of Austria; one's decision would then rest with circumstances. He would see the troops and his Guard once more. He already had told them frankly what had happened in Paris; he would speak to his *vieilles moustaches*, and everyone's energy would revive at the sound of his voice.

I felt bound to remind the Emperor that I was not of his opinion about Austria. Prince Schwarzenberg's tone, I said, left no doubt whatever as to his Court's intentions; his well-known frankness would prevent him from substituting his personal view for his sovereign's; he was no conspirator. His forthright statements, his refusals—even his disobliging behaviour towards me, out of character as it was—struck me as proof positive that the Allied decision had been reached in concurrence with the Emperor of Austria, that it would be a mistake for His Majesty to count on the latter, and that his trustfulness would confound his dearest interests. I could readily see that these observations left his belief unchanged, and him as blind as ever.

We talked of what was taking place in the army, and in the very Palace; of the views which the generals were loudly airing. I begged him to take sober thought and not to put off, as on other occasions, a decision which it was vital to make at once. He knew better than I did what was going on; his remarks proved it to me.

And yet he lulled himself with a multitude of hopes and sought to conjure up illusions which only a stern sense of duty

could move me to dispel in so distressful a moment. I performed that duty, since I was obliged to; and I could tell that he was beginning at last to visualize more soberly not the perplexities of his situation alone but also what its consequences might be. Yet, reverting now and again to all that he must have dreaded or could hope for, he spoke of these things more calmly and with less concern than many a private individual would show over the prospect of winning or losing a lawsuit.

The humiliation of France, when he had wished her to be so great and powerful—there was his chief concern, and after that the army. He barely mentioned his personal interests.

Despite his unwillingness, I reminded him again and again that he must think of his own welfare. "I need nothing," was his only reply. "It will cost me nothing to live as a private citizen. Six feet of earth is enough for a man. I have wasted forty years"—and then he recited lines from *Mithridate*. He ended his tirade by telling me that there were circumstances under which a general or an emperor took up more room than anybody else.[1] But every break in the thread of these long conversations showed me that he still did not believe his position so desperate as it was, nor that everything was slipping from him. "Four hours sooner," he exclaimed sorrowfully, "and everything was saved. At the sight of me in Paris, everyone would have braced up." Alas! the tilt of the scales was far from balanced now.

The Emperor even knew of the attempt to pull down his statue from the triumphal column. There was no trace of feeling in his remarks to me about that insult, which he passed off, sensibly, as a boyish prank. "If Monsieur Denon had not been too industrious behind my back and against my

[1] The Emperor probably alludes to these lines in *Mithridate*, II, iv:

> *. . . Il n'est point de rois, s'ils sont dignes de l'être,*
> *Qui, sur le trône assis, n'enviassent peut-être*
> *Au-dessus de leur gloire un naufrage élevé*
> *Que Rome et quarante ans ont à peine achevé.*

express orders, that would never have happened.[1] I put my veto on it when he brought me the plans. In my opinion, only the dead are entitled to public monuments—and I am not dead yet." I told him that he had no need of this tribute from the living—that many another splendid souvenir would immortalize him. "But there is human-kind for you, Caulaincourt: there's your mob! Unless your luck holds, you must expect them to insult you."

Thereupon I was dismissed. He would call for me at any moment—but meanwhile I was to send for Marshal Ney. "I wish to talk with him. I shall learn a lot if he speaks frankly, for he is sure to be posted about what is doing. Every intrigue in Paris must devolve about him, thanks to his father-in-law and his wife's relations.[2] Trust Talleyrand not to overlook any such means of seduction."

The Emperor held an unbroken series of interviews with Marshals Ney, Lefebvre, Oudinot, and various generals. There was bad news from the Midi;[3] and the Duke of Bassano had brought him word of what had happened in Paris the night before, after my departure. He felt this last very keenly, primed though he was for it by what I had been able to tell him of the general mood and the temper of the Senators. Nor was it long before word went round that the dethronement had been decreed last evening. If the Emperor was at all dismayed by this fresh outburst of calamity, he at once concealed the fact. An instant or so later, as he scanned the troops that he had mustered, his features wore the impassive serenity which was visible on them at the reviews in Vienna

[1] Cf. Vol. I, 516.

[2] Marshal Ney had married Aglaé-Louise, known as Eglé Augié, daughter of Pierre-César Augié (receiver-general of the Duchies of Bar and Lorraine under the Old Régime, postal administrator under the Empire), and of Adélaïde-Henriette Genet. Mme Ney's mother was the sister of Mme Campan, erstwhile reader to Mesdames and formerly lady-in-waiting to Marie-Antoinette.

[3] On March 24, Soult, compelled to retire before superior numbers, had reached Toulouse. Augereau, having lost Lyons, had fallen back towards Valence.

and Berlin.[1] Massing first the infantry and then the cavalry in the Cheval Blanc courtyard, and calling the officers and non-commissioned officers around him, he said to them:

"Soldiers!—by stealing three marches on us, the enemy has made himself master of Paris. He must be driven out. Some base Frenchmen, some *émigrés* whom we had pardoned, have declared for the white cockade and gone over to our foes: the cowards! . . . They will pay the price for this new outrage. . . . Let us swear, win or die, to make them respect this Tricolour which has found us for twenty years in the paths of glory and honour."[2]

This brief harangue galvanized everybody into life. All vied with one another to repeat it. Unanimous outbursts of cheering greeted the Emperor, as in the days of his prosperity. The troops defiled to get ready for departure, and victory would surely have crowned our efforts if an equal enthusiasm could have been imparted to all the leaders.

The Emperor returned to his study, whither he summoned, besides Maret and his *maison militaire*, the marshals and the generals who had attended him[3] and with whom he was pleased to consult. He laid the facts on the table. He said

[1] On April 3, shortly after midday, the Emperor reviewed Friant's division (Old Guard) and Henrion's division (Young Guard), which had arrived at Fontainebleau the evening before. The infantry was massed against two sides of the Cheval Blanc courtyard. (Koch, *Campagne de* 1814, II, 568; Pelet's journal in Rapetti, *La Défection de Marmont*, 338.)

[2] With the exception of three words, this text of Napoleon's harangue conforms to that given by Koch, *Campagne de* 1814, II, 569. See the text as given by General Pelet in Rapetti, *La Défection de Marmont*, 339. The committee on publication of the *Correspondance de Napoléon* preferred this latter version, given by them as number 21550.

[3] Conspicuously present were Marshals Berthier, Macdonald, Ney, Kellerman, Lefebvre, Oudinot. This session of Napoleon's with the marshals did not take place on the third, as Caulaincourt's narrative might lead one to think, but on the fourth, following the noonday trooping of the Guard, in the course of which the battalions had again cheered for the Emperor.

that the enemy's hatred and threats were directed solely against his person. There were some men, he went on, who perhaps had been taken in by the statements of the Allied Sovereigns and by their declarations of goodwill towards France; many a man had probably been delighted and deceived by the hope of peace and the prospect of repose—but that was only so much bait, intended to divide us after their failure to defeat us; France's only salvation lay in our solidarity, our stout-heartedness. Finally, he cared nothing about the throne for his own sake; but the fact remained that, for our own best interests, it was he alone who could guarantee our independence and security, our fortunes, and the existence of our families.

His address was lively, forceful, dispassionate, and full of well-chosen arguments: the interests of France and the army were the burden of it.

He spoke of his son, of an abdication in his favour, of the disadvantages of that expedient, and finally of its chance of success, which appeared to him unlikely; and he treated the question as far more important to the country's interests than to his own. He added that since he never had cared for anything but France's happiness, he was open to any suggestion which might assure it, and was prepared to make every sacrifice. All he required was convincing proof that this or any other course of action would really be profitable to France —that this proposal from the enemy was not a deceitful offer, designed to ruin us all.

Since I was obliged to go and send Saint-Mars on his way, I was present only at the start of this discussion; the subsequent details were repeated to me afterwards.

The Emperor sensed that the silent approval of his hearers told less about their convictions than about the respect they felt for him, and which he still imposed. The majority of them, he saw, were not so much impressed by his judicial arguments as they were by the advantages to be had from his abdication in favour of the King of Rome. Therefore he allowed no opportunity for the airing of any such views as a number of generals were perhaps ready to express. He had

seen enough of their faces to know what was in their minds: he had plumbed opinion, when all he intended was to sound it. So then he spoke briefly of the Bourbons, the Parisian intrigues on their behalf, and that faction's disabilities.

There was unanimity on that point; every voice was raised against them. Marshals Lefebvre and Ney spoke up strongly. Ney added that there was no security for his children except under the Imperial dynasty. "The Bourbons and the nobles," said he, "would very quickly remind them that their father was nothing but a peasant, a common hussar, and so forth."[1]

After this conference the Emperor called me to him, and said:

"The marshals and a lot of the generals have lost their wits. They do not see that without me there is no more army, and that without the army there is no more security for them. Because the enemy is in Paris, they throw themselves to the wolves. They said nothing, but I saw their leaning towards the abdication clearly enough. They think it would mean merely the shifting of one man. The imbeciles cannot perceive that France's safety and theirs both lie in me, that this offer is only a lure, that my son can give no security—that it is all a treacherous trick to ruin the country. Stripping everything away from the father is the first step. That is all the same to me. I was born a soldier and will get along well enough without an empire; but France cannot dispense with

[1] Here Caulaincourt's account substantiates what Thiers says (XVII, 709), to wit, that Napoleon's conference with his marshals was not signalized by the extreme violence attributed to it by some who follow the *Journal des Débats* of April 9 and what Thiers calls "the brags of certain military personages who, wishing to promote their own stock some days later, painted their guilt blacker in respect of Napoleon than had actually been the case." Cf. Macdonald, *Souvenirs*, 266, who gives a detailed account of this scene, wherein his attitude, if it were as he says, was certainly most embarrassing to the Emperor. One ought to bear in mind, however, that those reminiscences were compiled in 1825–1826, at which time the Duke of Taranto was Grand Chancellor of the Legion of Honour and major-general of the Royal Guard. Cf. also *Le Maréchal Ney*, by Count de la Bédoyère (according to the documents of General Edgar Ney), 45.

me, or she will fall beneath the yoke which Alexander and the schemes of Talleyrand will subject her to." He added that the marshals whom he had seen during the morning had not concealed from him their aversion to marching against Paris; he saw that they were trying to find subterfuges. However, that would not deter him. The idea that he was actuated by vengefulness towards the Parisians was a figment of the conspiracies in the capital, he went on—as if he could possibly want to take vengeance at the expense of a populace which, on the contrary, was well disposed and wholly on his side, for the treachery of two or three conspirators who had sold themselves to the British. "I am going to fight the Russians," he added, "not the Parisians, who will surely support me. The latest reports I had from Maret leave me in no doubt whatever about the goodwill of Paris. The doings there are simply the outcome of the intrigues of half-a-hundred traitors."

He mentioned the dethronement, saying that it would be common knowledge before long, if indeed it was not already. He added that communications addressed from Paris to various generals had been brought to him, leaving him in no doubt as to the schemes that had already been concocted;[1] minds were being skilfully played upon, and he was going to make haste accordingly. To fall back upon the Loire would gain him nothing, for a troop-movement would lead to defection amongst the leaders and desertions from the ranks. Treason would pursue them there, just as at Fontainebleau; wherefore it was preferable to try one's luck beneath the walls of Paris, while the army still held together. Once the battle was joined, said he, the generals would be compelled to fight; things had not yet come to such a pass, apparently, that anyone would care disobey him to his face or bring shame upon his own head by abandoning his Emperor in the moment of battle. His late discussion with all the marshals and generals—possibly I had heard it—had given him still further proof that there was

[1] During the conference with the marshals, the Emperor had listened to a reading of Beurnonville's letter, in which the general invited Macdonald to betray the Imperial cause.

no time to be lost. For the generals, not perceiving the consequences of abdication in his son's favour, were veering towards that course. They would think better of it, said he, but not until too late.

"So much the worse for them, in short. If they had stopped to think, they would have comprehended, as Ney said, that they and their children need me more than I need them, since I do not care to keep the throne. As for myself, my decision is made. While you are negotiating, we will fight it out—and the battle will decide the whole question."

The Guard, he continued, was about to shift its position to Essonnes,[1] at which point he was happy to say that he had Marmont to rely on. For Essonnes was where it was vitally important for him to have a tried and true commander, on account of the continual contact between it and Paris, and of the avenues of communication which Talleyrand would certainly try to establish. But speaking of negotiations, diplomacy would have to gain him the time for his manœuvres. The Senate's proclamation of dethronement would go for nothing if his projected battle forced the enemy to evacuate fifty leagues of ground: a success revived French morale as quickly as a reverse broke it down. He said that I must therefore return instantly to Paris, before the movement of the Guard became known and the engagement had started. Lastly, he was not at all averse to the idea of abdicating in favour of his son if it were feasible to do so, and if it would guarantee the throne to the latter. I was at liberty to announce his willingness, and he was ready to make this sacrifice —if thereby he could secure France's well-being and clear the foe from her territory. It struck him, however, that this expedient would fall far short of accomplishing the result expected of it. The establishment of an Austrian Regency in Paris could not possibly suit Russia; and so he did not believe that Alexander was honestly disposed to agree thereto. It was vital not to be duped by foreigners, whose dominant motive was to sow discord amongst Frenchmen—to despoil France

[1] Following the review on April 3, the Guard had started on the march through the Forest of Fontainebleau.

by giving her a government which would either cause internal dissension to spring up or else choke off all initiative of whatever sort. To-day, he went on, many persons, and generals with the rest, could see and wish only for peace, no matter what the cost. The very marshals could talk of nothing else —as if it depended on him or them to make peace on the spot. For the time being, nobody perceived that an unsound peace would do the country more harm than would the prolongation of the war; that an unsound peace would kill our industries, whereas the prolongation of the war would merely hold our trade in abeyance; and that with our internal prosperity based as it now was on this industrial foundation which he had fostered, it was necessary not to act heedlessly.

He went on to say that, taken together with the Duke of Cadore's arrival, the courier whom he had just sent to the Emperor of Austria would probably make that prince decide to proceed to Paris and support the Regency; that perhaps I might even be seconded at once in this matter by Prince Schwarzenberg, who was sure to be in receipt of orders as soon as His Austrian Majesty knew that he, the Emperor Napoleon, had decided to abdicate in his son's favour. Once his decision was known, Schwarzenberg (he never questioned it) would back me on his own responsibility. And so it was necessary to concentrate on giving the Generalissimo to understand very clearly that neither France nor the army consented to the Bourbons; that the war would be endless and certain to bring shifts of fortune if the restoration of the Bourbons were stubbornly insisted on. If he did not abdicate, he continued, the complexion of his affairs might easily change between now and a few days hence. Within three months the enemy's presence, their outrages, and all the counterplots on behalf of the Bourbons would set up a reaction in men's minds and in the nation, and this would be wholly favourable to him; all men of intelligence, all true statesmen would readily understand that his present disposition to abdicate in his son's favour must be taken advantage of. Besides, he added, if Fortune did not betray him there would be developments within the next forty-eight hours that would clear up

the whole question. It would be well, in the meantime, to start negotiating on this basis, which would serve as reply to the overtures that had been made to me and as grounds for discussion, since, he reiterated, one was not rejecting any of the proposals or even the conditions laid down.

"Leave at once," he added. "You know my intentions and plans. If I am victorious, we shall have an honourable peace, for the enemy's reverse will cost him something, now that the countryside is roused against the Cossacks. If I lose the battle, poor France will have to submit. As for me, I tell you once more that I need nothing. Will they accept my son? Leave at once."

I refused to undertake any new mission unless His Majesty provided me with colleagues. I told him that of course I was ready to do whatever I could to serve him—that with things the way they stood, nothing could hold me back. But there were too many divergent interests involved, and there would be no time to spend in waiting for instructions—not when even the slightest decisions might have consequences so grave that I could not take the sole responsibility for them. Moreover, I demanded that he give me written instructions and powers drawn up in due form. The Emperor seemed to see no present need for this. My credit as negotiator, I pointed out, was exhausted; anybody else would do better; I would be only too happy if he allowed me to stay with the troops.

After a moment's reflexion, the Emperor told me that I was right, although he would have preferred, notwithstanding, to have me leave at once. Other appointments would lead to delay, quite apart from the difficulty of making them. He needed his marshals to head the corps; but he thought it would be well to select one of them, so as to give weight to whatever I said about the army's mood, its attachment and loyalty to him, and its antipathy to the Bourbons. And then, without deciding anything, he skipped over to various particulars about the ill-temper already prevalent at Headquarters; and he made some kind remarks, the same as he had when we were returning from Russia and from Dresden, about my behaviour towards him.

"If you had been willing, Caulaincourt, I would have loaded you with favours. The invariable harshness of your remarks repelled the liking I felt for you; you wish to drive me as you do your postilions."

He then spoke to me for the first time about the Russian campaign: "You told me the truth; but what others kept telling me, what I had seen of winter in Poland, the fine weather we were having . . . I was misled. The news that was given me from Vienna, from Vilna, even from Petersburg, and the word from Kutusoff's headquarters, all represented Alexander as ready to negotiate—as held back from it by nothing but the British coterie's influence, over which the outspoken sentiment of the Russians for peace was at the point of prevailing. Nevertheless, I should have succeeded if I had held to my plan and allowed two years for my expedition, or even if I had spent no more than a fortnight at Moscow. The Russians can take no proper credit for our reverse. Winter alone defeated us—although my Star, as they call it, has played me false. Sweden and Turkey slipped away from me. Poland was my tool and objective both, and it failed me. The army performed the impossible, but the Cabinet gave it no support. Maret was taken in: we have been tricked. Those mistakes are costing dear. Four hours earlier at Paris, though, and all would have been retrieved. Within a couple of hours all would be yet—if I had my army reassembled at Essonnes. The enemies' position makes them ripe for the plucking: *un peu d'énergie*—a little show of force! What glory for the citizens of Paris and their National Guard if they booted out the Cossacks and took these foreigners in hand! But we as a nation live in too much luxury; we are too well off, too easy-going to have any such energy as that. Even so, the peasants of the Champagne, the Burgundians, the very Picards have shown the Parisians the right example.[1] No, it is not the people whose vigour is wanting: it is the men whom I have set to lead them who are betraying me."

After these remarks the Emperor spoke to me of persons

[1] Cf. H. Houssaye, 1814, 403.

who shared his affection and returned it: "Maret loves me. So does Berthier. Duroc was devoted to me, but he did not love me. And you—you have told me the truth, but you do not love me. You are loyal to me, because you are a man of your word: wherefore you have my esteem. You know that I do not esteem everyone whom I employ."

Clean lost to view, now, were the negotiations and the abdication itself, which had been the question a moment before. The Emperor ran through a partial list of the persons who had access to him, and then of the marshals and generals, in order to arrive at a choice of one or two plenipotentiaries. I insisted that he should make it three, so as to include the Duke of Bassano, who, enjoying his full confidence and doubtless knowing his innermost designs, would be better able than anyone else, said I, to serve him under trying circumstances such as those, in which, since everything happened unforeseen, it was vital to make the best decision on the spot—or at any rate the decision that would be acceptable to him.

"The foreigners are too angry with Maret," replied the Emperor. "You know—none better—that I do my own governing, and that he acts only on my orders. But that does not make them any the less angry with him; and to choose him at this moment would hinder rather than help any sort of negotiation. I hold out for your going to Paris; I even demand it of your devotion" (that was the expression he used); "I will assign you one or two marshals." I insisted upon two, arguing that, as the Emperor had agreed, what we were to say about the sentiments of the army must be made to carry weight. This point struck him as well taken, and he immediately chose the Duke of Ragusa. Bassano interrupted us at that moment, bringing him papers. The Emperor told me to go and get ready; he would send for me in a minute. Meanwhile, he would be thinking over his selections, which we would have to discuss.

The Emperor summoned me after an hour had passed. Marshal Ney, he said, had come to tell him what was doing in the army, and what effect had been produced by rumours

of the Senate's proclamation of dethronement, and how adverse the feeling was about a movement against Paris because the troops, so it was said, were going to plunder the city by way of vengeance for the behaviour of the city officials and of certain youngsters who had brought out the white cockade. His Majesty added that the marshal rehearsed the protestations of loyalty which he, like the Duke of Danzig, had made before in the presence of his colleagues, to the effect that his own welfare, his children's, and the interests of every man who had come through the Revolution depended on the maintenance of the Imperial dynasty, which alone held forth security to him. Ney then went on, he said, to voice a thousand new protestations, adding countless other things in proof of his devotion.

"After that," the Emperor told me, "I do not believe I could make a better choice, under the present circumstances. I can ill afford to spare him from the battle, for he is certainly the most forceful of my marshals. But, because he is one of the army's great men, trusted by many of the officers and by the soldiers, his opinion will have more weight, especially here, and he will be more useful to me in the negotiations than any other—if he stays on the right track. I shall replace him here; but you be careful of him, for he will find himself on slippery ground at Paris, thanks to his wife's family. At present, he is well disposed; I have no way of telling what he will do an hour from now if they tamper with him, for he has no head on his shoulders. He is as weak as he is brave, and his inordinate ambition makes him an easy prey."

The Emperor then went into certain details about that marshal's life, proving to me that he thought highly of his courage but less so of his character. He remarked that the absence of marshals would mean batons for generals of division, who deserved them on account of their skill. At present, anything that stirred up rivalry was so much to the good. "Announce my choice of Ney immediately," added the Emperor. "Let him be informed, and Marmont also; the two of them will go with you. Do not waste a moment.

Call Fain,[1] so that I may write them officially. Have them tell Marmont at the same time to come straight here for orders from me."

I went out to do the Emperor's bidding. I had barely walked across the outer office before I was called back. It had occurred to him, said the Emperor, that Marmont was at Essonnes, right on our way; it was useless for me to write him. It would mean a delay to have him in, when we must be off in haste—he would write Marmont to be ready for us, and we would pick him up. While he was dictating letters to both marshals, I sent word to Ney. When Marmont's letter was copied, the Emperor signed it and told me to urge the orderly to ride post-haste, to give the marshal time enough to be prepared and not keep us waiting.

On my way to find an orderly, I met the Duke of Taranto coming into the outer office, and upon returning to the study I informed the Emperor.

"I might give you the Duke of Taranto in place of the Duke of Ragusa," said he, after a moment's reflexion. "Macdonald does not like me, but he is a man of his word, of high principles, and he can be relied on, I believe.[2] Marmont is useful to me at Essonnes; it is the point of contact with Paris. No one inspires me with more confidence than Marmont. What do you think of it, Caulaincourt? Would you put your trust in Macdonald?" I said that I would. "Run, then! Have Marmont's letter brought back to me:

[1] Agathon-Jean-François Fain (*b.* Paris, January 11, 1778; *d.* Paris, September 16, 1837), chief archivist of the State Secretariat after the 18th Brumaire, had been appointed archivist-secretary of the Emperor's cabinet at the end of January, 1806; and in 1813 he became chief secretary. In 1811 the Emperor had likewise appointed him master of requests to the Council of State. Under Louis Philippe, Fain was chief secretary of the cabinet and administrator of the civil list for a second time.

[2] On April 11, following, Napoleon told Bausset: "Macdonald is a brave and true soldier. . . . Only during these recent circumstances have I brought myself to appreciate the full nobility of his character; his ties with Moreau had prejudiced me against him. . . . But I did him an injustice, and I greatly regret not having known him better." (Bausset, *Mémoires*, II, 302.)

somebody ride post-haste after the orderly if he has gone." They found him as he was leaving the Cheval Blanc courtyard, and I returned the letter to the Emperor's desk, whereupon His Majesty resumed conversation about the Duke of Ragusa. For his mind dwelt on Essonnes and its contact with the capital as if he had felt a presentiment of what was taking place.

"I can count on Marmont," he told me. "He is one of my old aides-de-camp. He was brought up in my camp. He is a man of education—a man of sound principles. There is not another officer for whom I have done so much. Chance favoured me by placing his corps at Essonnes. There is one thing, though, that astonishes me: he has not made a single report—not a word does he tell me about what happens in Paris. Yet Talleyrand must have come knocking at his door in more ways than one. . . . Say nothing yet to Macdonald about my plans; I wish to talk with him before I appoint him. Sit over yonder while I dictate your instructions, so that there will be time to copy them clean while I am chatting with the marshal."

I pointed out to him that there were various matters pertaining to the Ministry, and that I should attend to them before departing in haste, for I had not had a moment to myself since my arrival. "Go tend to your business," he said. "Send for Marshal Ney, and have the Duke of Taranto come in." He soon summoned me again and told me that he was extremely pleased with his talk with Macdonald, who had shown the most affecting loyalty for him: "There is a splendid character. I believe he will second you ably, and that he will be as true to me as Marmont would have been." His Majesty had informed him in person of this proof of his confidence. The marshal had accepted, and was ready to leave. The Prince of the Moskowa had likewise been to see the Emperor, had seemed flattered by his appointment, and had once more protested his devotion a thousand times over.

The Emperor, who already had dictated drafts of several statements before hitting on one to suit him, finally completed his revision and let me see it. I pointed out to him that it

was meaningless and too inadequate even to be admitted as evidence of authorization to treat. He argued at great length over the making of suitable revisions; and he ended by remarking himself that since he was not the stronger party, and must therefore gain time to fight and win or else the means of successful negotiation on his son's behalf, his declaration would have to be more positive than he had intended. He made a number of changes in it, and in the powers of attorney and the instructions as well. (Their form, when we set out with them, was such that they would have enabled us to gain his objective if the state of affairs, the state of men's minds, and treachery had not simultaneously dashed our every hope.)[1]

Then, calling in the two marshals whom he had appointed as plenipotentiaries, His Majesty handed us his declaration and our credentials. Ney and Macdonald offered some

[1] The *Archives de Caulaincourt*, file 13, contain a copy of the declaration here mentioned. This copy, which is in the Duke of Vicenza's handwriting, is entitled by him: "Notification of the instructions for delivery to the Allied Sovereigns if those proposals had been agreed to." The text of this instrument differs appreciably from that published by Fain and as *Correspondance de Napoléon*, 21555, and reproduced by all historians, notably by Thiers and Houssaye; and it differs no less from another version, printed as note to the *Correspondance*. These different versions are the result of the Emperor's indecision. Here, in any case, is the text as found in the *Archives de Caulaincourt*, representing, in all likelihood, the version finally adopted by Napoleon:

"The Foreign Powers having declared that the Emperor Napoleon was an obstacle to the re-establishment of peace and to the territorial integrity of France, and Whereas: being loyal to his principles, and to his promises to further the happiness and glory of the French people in all things, Therefore: the Emperor Napoleon declares that he is ready to abdicate in favour of his son, and to send that Act in due form as a message to the Senate, as soon as the Powers shall have recognized Napoleon II together with the Constitutional Regency of the Empress. Upon this condition, the Emperor will withdraw immediately to the place which shall be agreed. Given at our Palace of Fontainebleau, April 4, 1814. Signed: NAPOLEON."

At the foot of this copy, and also in Caulaincourt's hand, is written: "The original was given back to the Emperor upon our return to Fontainebleau, the Regency having been rejected."

criticisms of the declaration, which they found still inadequate. At first the Emperor declined to alter a thing, but, since he was convinced in advance that their objections were well founded, he agreed first to one change, then to another, stated his reasons for refusing yet further demands for revision, and gave us leave to depart, urging us to use all despatch. Everyone was to make his final arrangements.

During the time it took to copy our instructions and the declaration as adopted, the Emperor sent for me. Speaking to me again of the marshals whom he had assigned me, he praised the Duke of Taranto; and then he made a sudden shift to questions of world politics. Forgetful of all I had reported to him upon my arrival from Paris, of the whole tenor of my conversation, but especially of whatever might run contrary to his plans—deluding himself, as in the season of his *bonne étoile*—he told me that I should be able to rely on Austria. The letter which he had written to the Emperor Francis, but above all the formal resolution which he had just drawn in favour of his son, would change the entire attitude of that Court. If, said he, the battle were to fall short of the success for which he hoped, thus leaving him no other resources, Prince Schwarzenberg would surely support the Regency. All his additional remarks proved him fully determined to attack.

"I care nothing for the throne," he repeated yet again. "I was born a soldier and shall be only too glad to live a plain citizen's life. My sacrifice must be to France's real advantage. I abdicate for that end alone. Since I am the criminal, the Allied Powers can bring forward no good excuse for depriving France of Belgium, or even of Antwerp, now that I place myself, of my own accord, outside the question and the course of politics. France is entitled to the Frankfort terms; Europe's geography and its interests have not changed in the past four months. If this is a war against me and my ambition, then France, apart from me, should not be treated as a foe. Say that no sacrifice is too dear for me if they are acting in good faith, and so long as the invaders demand nothing which debases and weakens France. Harp on that to Alexander: it

is the proper way to expose the treacherous intentions that lurk behind that screen of kindly words. A Regency," he added, "cannot disturb the repose of Europe. . . . I do not urge you to mind my son's interests," he said in dismissing me; "I know that I can rely on you. As for myself, you know that I need nothing."

He added the comment that unless Talleyrand turned Alexander's head, the Tsar would have not a single motive for raising opposition to the Regency, since, in the long run, Austria's influence would prove irksome to the French and would incline them so much the more towards Russia. He urged that I remark this to the Tsar, and he added that Alexander knew too much of men and politics not to view this question from every side; that he was too intelligent and too well acquainted with the Bourbons not to be persuaded that they were distasteful to France—that dissension would thus be sown there. "If Europe must have peace," said he, "as every echo to-day keeps repeating, then France must be made to feel secure. What she must have, therefore, is a government fit to safeguard her every interest, and one which is not out for vengeance. By all means, beware of Talleyrand: his whole concern is for his selfish interests. He will try to tamper with Ney; take care in that quarter, for the marshal's ambition can lead him into all kinds of silly blunders if he is hopeful of cutting a figure under the new government. I am counting on you, Caulaincourt," the Emperor repeated by way of dismissal.

The Guard was on the move; the troops were filing in and consolidating; all was being made ready for another appeal to the fortunes of war as we took the road to Paris. Marshal Macdonald, to whom this mission came as a surprise, had brought no carriage. He accepted a place in mine, and Marshal Ney followed in his own.

CHAPTER V

Marmont's Defection

WHEN we reached Essonnes,[1] we were forced to stop at the Duke of Ragusa's headquarters and await the return of the truce-bearer who would have to go on ahead and parley for our admission. We found the duke with his divisional commanders: they all looked more embarrassed than surprised to see us, and Ragusa himself appeared most eager to learn why we had come. He assured us that we would certainly be admitted without the slightest delay, for Prince Schwarzenberg was at the Château de Chevilly close by. All of them stood gazing askance. They whispered together with an air of astonishment, while Marshals Ney and Macdonald drew Ragusa aside and told him briefly of the Emperor's resolution and the errand which he had just now committed to us.

During these preliminaries I went down into the courtyard to inform the truce-bearer that if necessary he could gain our admission by making use of the passports which the Tsar had had provided for me . . . but the officer had gone. Since there were also some orders to be given to the posting-agent who had our journey in charge, it was a moment or two before I returned upstairs. Imagine my amazement when Macdonald came and took me aside to give me a terse statement of what Ragusa had been telling them, whereupon the duke himself instantly repeated the gist of it for my ears:

He, Ragusa, had received from General Beurnonville a letter conveying overtures from Talleyrand, who suggested that he declare for peace and induce his generals to do likewise.

[1] The Emperor's plenipotentiaries reached Essonnes at about 4 p.m. (Rapetti, *La Défection de Marmont*, 350: Fabvier's answers to a questionnaire covering these events, addressed to him by Gourgaud). They were accompanied by Rayneval and Rumigny.

In addition, Talleyrand had led him to infer that the time was ripe for the making of whatever arrangements might be suitable to the army. The Allied Sovereigns' proclamation and the Senate's decrees had been passed along to him. Accordingly, he had reached an understanding with his generals. The subsequent negotiations had brought Prince Schwarzenberg to Chevilly for the sake of despatch, certain difficulties having arisen over arrangements relative to the Emperor's independence and personal safety—and a moment before, at the very time of our arrival, the Austrian had sent an officer through to announce the acceptance of his, Ragusa's, demands.[1]

I pointed out to him that he could not regard himself as definitely committed, since, from what he and Macdonald

[1] We call attention to the importance of this passage, which convicts Marmont. It has been seen above that Marmont, following Montessuy's mission, had written Schwarzenberg on April 3 and proposed a formal agreement which would guarantee, first, the free withdrawal of French troops into Normandy, and second, Napoleon Bonaparte's life and liberty within some certain area of circumscribed territory. Schwarzenberg's reply, dated April 4, accepting those conditions, was published in the *Moniteur* of the 7th, and is given by Rapetti, *La Défection de Marmont*, 139. Now, in his *Réponse à la proclamation du Golfe Juan* (inserted in the *Moniteur de Gand*, No. 1, and reproduced in the marshal's *Mémories*, VII, 145), Marmont says: "I imparted to them (Napoleon's plenipotentiaries) the arrangements which had been made with Prince Schwarzenberg but which were incomplete, *since I had not yet received the written guarantee that I demanded.*" And in his *Mémoires* (I, 261), Ragusa says: "I informed the Emperor's plenipotentiaries of my *pourparlers* with Schwarzenberg, adding that I would instantly break off all personal negotiation." On p. 265 he adds that after the Sixth Corps arrived at Versailles, he called upon Schwarzenberg for the stipulated declaration and, through the latter's good faith, obtained it. This declaration was made, "albeit after the fact, under date of April 4, the time when the *pourparlers* took place, in order to cloak the confusion then prevalent and given an appearance of regularity to that which had produced fear and disorder." Rapetti has already pointed out the duplicity of Marmont's behaviour towards the plenipotentiaries. H. Houssaye (1814, 603) has shown that all documentary evidence contradicts the version that there was an antedated letter: cf. Schwarzenberg's orders of April 4, Sir Charles Stewart's letter to

Continued on next page

had told me, I gathered that nothing was signed as yet. Betraying embarrassment, he replied that there was actually nothing signed but that the moment of signing was at hand, now that Schwarzenberg had signified his complete acceptance.[1]

We gazed at one another anxiously. Ragusa eased the tension, however, by declaring most emphatically that he would make common cause with us; he would serve notice on the Austrian that everything which had happened must be regarded as null and void. He talked, meanwhile, like a man who knew himself open to censure and wished to put everything right. As I say, his words calmed us. He might have kept us in the dark, forestalled our efforts, or weakened them at best. The frankness of his admissions reassured us. We believed in the sincerity of his willingness to atone, as well as in his repentance. That was no time to be captious. The Duke of Ragusa sought to extenuate his guilt by revealing every motive which, according to him, had been his guide. The Emperor and France, said he, found themselves ruined as a result of the invasion. He had thought to save the Emperor by stipulating his security and independence, and to save France by assuring her an immediate peace through his projected defection.

He added that now, since the Emperor had become reconciled to signing that peace for which all hearts were eager, we could rely on him, Ragusa; that he would not deviate in the

Lord Liverpool of same date, the Langeron Memoirs, Maubreuil's testimony, a letter of Bordessoulle's in 1830, et cetera. Caulaincourt's text affords a startling confirmation of this thesis, since it shows that Marmont admitted at 4 p.m. on April 4 that he knew of Schwarzenberg's acceptance; therefore, that he had received the Austrian's letter. Thus it is proven that Marmont had committed himself to the enemy at this date.

[1] Marmont apparently intended to imply only that there had been no drawing-up of an instrument according to the rules of diplomatic procedure, under which the signatures of the two contracting parties would have had to appear at the bottom of the same draft, on the same sheet of paper. That was the truth; but the written exchange had been fully as formal.

slightest degree from the cause we were defending, and from the army's.

We were far from making light of his *démarches*, and of how prejudicial they were to our interests. Our negotiations might well have received their death-blow in advance—and we let him feel it. But what was there to do? Had his defection been prearranged not only amongst his generals but with his corps commanders and field officers as well?

We had no time to investigate how matters stood with his generals. I saw every reason for anxiety, but a single sign of our mistrustfulness would have precipitated total ruin. The part of wisdom, and perhaps the only choice, was to take advantage of Ragusa's professed good intentions and his desire to make amends for what he had done. Any private discussion, every move on our part, would look suspicious to men so vulnerable as they, and so intent on watching us.

Macdonald was as downcast as I. We kept glancing at one another as two men will who need to vent their mutual indignation, but who must hold themselves in for policy's sake.[1]

Ragusa went on repeating that he wished to set everything right: that he would make the generals a declaration of his solemn resolve to break off the understanding, at our demand and according to his pledge.

Here was no time to argue, let alone to upbraid men who had it in their power to ruin our cause. Our errand already made them mistrust us. For France's salvation, it was necessary to leave them still convinced that they had not betrayed her—that because their arrangement was known only to us, and had not been signed or acted upon, no harm would come of it. The Emperor might not even find it out.

For the time being, therefore, we clutched eagerly at the hope offered us by the duke's display of good intentions. I did my best to bolster up his resolution with whatever arguments I thought apropos, and Ney and Macdonald joined me

[1] "'Get me out of danger first, and speak your mind later.' Especially since all display or comment whatever turned out to be superfluous." (Macdonald, *Souvenirs*, 270.)

in urging him to carry out his intention of writing to Schwarzenberg. But now, on second thought, Ragusa began to see obstacles. How could he contrive to let the Austrian know that the understanding was broken off? He would find it hard to write a letter, no doubt. As far as I could judge, however, his hesitation merely betrayed uncertainty over the most convenient way of extricating himself from his false position.

"Simply state," I told him, "that our mission has altered your views; that you are making common cause with the army, with us, to protect the interests of France and of the Emperor, who is ready to abdicate in his son's favour."

The duke's embarrassment was obvious and filled me with misgivings. Once again I asked him, as Macdonald had done, if the agreement was signed. "No." His reply was emphatic. "Then breaking it off is no great ceremony," my colleagues told him. However, since he still looked perplexed over the means of making his declaration to the Austrian, Ney said: "If it embarrasses you to write to him, come with us—you shall tell him."[1] This decision apparently pleased Ragusa. He raised not the least objection; far from it. He now seemed as resolute as could be, and most anxious to set forth and retrieve everything.[2]

Ragusa gave us his word that he was going, in person and at once, to declare to Schwarzenberg that, in view of our arrival, the negotiations begun with him were to be regarded as though they never had happened; that all was broken off.

He turned again to the motives for his conduct. His action was justified, so he tried to tell us, by the hopelessness of the

[1] According to Macdonald (*Souvenirs*, 271), it was Caulaincourt who first proposed that Marmont should come to Paris. Marmont (*Mémoires*, VII, 154) confirms this.

[2] In his *Mémoires*, VI, 261, Marmont says: "The gentlemen demanded that I should accompany them to Paris. I reflected that after what had happened, my uniting with them might carry great weight; and so I consented with alacrity." It seems more reasonable to agree with Houssaye (1814, 606) that Marmont was in a hurry to put the hundred thousand men of the Allied armies between himself and Imperial headquarters.

situation. Despite the grave state of affairs, his complaint ran, the Emperor, by keeping silent, had abandoned the army and France to their own uncertainty. He, Ragusa, had opened his negotiating simply to prevent a civil war and in order to save the Emperor from his own blindness, thanks to which, if one were to judge by recent events, His Majesty would sacrifice his most devoted men and his ultimate resources rather than subscribe to such a peace as circumstances, the miseries of invasion, and the occupation of Paris made imperative. In deciding to accept Talleyrand's overtures, he had thought to render a patriotic service, helpful to France and the Emperor both. If he had mistaken the proper way of reaching the goal he had set for himself, of carrying out the task which it was our mission to discharge more thoroughly, he had done so with the best of intentions: "And to prove it," said he, "I am joining you—we will throw in our lots together." He did not pretend to ignore how culpable his *démarches* must make him look in our sight; but he assured us that because of the harm his arrangement had done to our negotiations, he was all the more willing and ready to atone for everything.

My recollection of what the duke told us is, I believe, exact; for he appeared to me so guilty that I paid special attention to his words, both for the sake of justifying him to the Emperor—if that were possible—and for historical accuracy.

I pointed out to him that there was only one way to make complete amends: he must declare to the Austrians, immediately, that the negotiation was off, and that his corps, like himself, would not budge from the army, whose lot it would ever share. He replied that that was all included under his proposal to us, and his pledge.

A moment later, though, he moved close to me and dropped me a hint of his secret concern over what warning the Emperor would receive and what action His Majesty might take against him if he learned about these doings. I saw what was troubling Ragusa, and why he had not unburdened himself in my presence when we first arrived. I set myself to reassure him, knowing that otherwise all was lost.

I reopened our proposal that he go in person to Fontainebleau and make a full statement to the Emperor. The frankness of this gesture, I pointed out to him, would serve to excuse his wrong-doings and prevent any further suspicion; the Emperor would be left without a pretext for finding fault; there would be no lingering doubt if he went himself. It was all in vain: Ragusa apparently dreaded the consequences of the Emperor's first violent impulse.[1] As well as I could, I repeated every flattering remark that His Majesty had made about him a few hours ago. In mentioning the proof of confidence that the Emperor had intended to give him, I cited the highly complimentary reasons for which the idea had been dropped. Whether because Ragusa thought I was inventing these details to fit present circumstances, or because they made his guilt look blacker to himself, he refused to fall in with this suggestion, and he showed no little uneasiness.

Anxiety, I saw, would drive him to do in terror or despair what he had meant to do for the sake of ambition, if he no longer had our presence to sustain him and found himself alone with his thoughts and his generals. By coming along with us, I told him, and declaring personally to Schwarzenberg that he would not leave us and was frankly on our side, he would repair the mischief he had done to France and the Emperor before there was time to inform His Majesty about it. Thus, until the wrong had been set right, he would be screened from that first impulse of anger which he dreaded—and the Emperor would know nothing. This notion apparently soothed the duke and gave him much pleasure besides. He then promised anew to send word to Schwarzenberg that there was no more negotiation between them. He instructed his generals to that effect in our presence.[2] Moreover, he

[1] "He refused, dreading that the Emperor . . . might have him arrested and sentenced." (Macdonald, *Souvenirs*, 271.)

[2] H. Houssaye (1814, 607), holds it doubtful whether Marmont gave those orders in the presence of the plenipotentiaries. The present passage shakes his contention. It likewise refutes the opinion of Vaudoncourt, *Histoire des Campagnes de* 1814 *et* 1815 (Paris, 1826), III, 46, and of Rapetti, *La Défection de Marmont*,

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went on to address them in a fashion calculated to make them understand what might have been the consequences of the action which he had felt himself called upon to take, and he stressed the benefits that were to result, for France and for everyone, from the union between the army and our mission. He told his generals that he was going with us to Schwarzenberg to explain this change of plan, but that he would return before long to his corps, which was not to budge. He then left us, in order—so he said—to inform Schwarzenberg that everything was cancelled, and, as far as we could tell, to carry out his solemnly reiterated promises.

Macdonald and I conferred dolefully over this wretched occurrence. He was angry and scornful, and Ney no less so. But the Duke of Ragusa's final decision and his promises gave plausible grounds, seemingly, for feeling reassured about the possible consequences of a development which might have proved fatal if we had not come in the nick of time—or so we told each other.

Ought I to warn the Emperor? I confess that I deferred asking myself that question. The idea of playing informer was repellent to me, and doubly so was the thought of informing against a man in whose soundness of character His Majesty, at the very moment of our departure, had let me see that he still placed every confidence. To check the calamity: that was the main thing—and that end, I thought, had been accomplished. What was the temper of the troops and the generals? We knew nothing about it; the marshal, whom we saw with most of his generals, apparently had been the sole agent and was the only one involved. It struck us, therefore, that the only peril lay in the rôle played by the marshal himself, whose anxiety might make him shift about if he remained

147 and 239, that Marmont countermanded no orders whatsoever. Furthermore, Bordessoulle, in a letter to Marmont from Versailles, April 5, 1814, which gives his account of how the defection was carried out, speaks of the motives whereby he was instigated "to execute the movement that we had agreed to postpone until the return of the Prince of the Moskowa and the Dukes of Taranto and Vicenza." (Marmont, *Mémoires*, VI, 348.)

with his corps. It was unthinkable that a few divisional commanders who knew themselves wholly uncompromised —one of whom, General Souham, had come to the Emperor last evening to affirm his devotion and ask for a gratuity, which he had obtained[1]—might dream of taking over the part of traitor-in-chief. Still less would we have admitted, even if the thought had occurred to us, that so many generals, acting without orders and knowing that we were at Paris with their marshal, might perhaps conspire amongst themselves to complete the web of treachery which he had planned, but which now, in their presence, he had broken the thread of.

As for Regusa himself, the shamefulness of betraying his colleagues face to face would answer for his conduct as long as he was with us. He was going with us, he was prepared to tell Schwarzenberg that he was with us, and he had given his solemn promise accordingly. Therefore he seemed to us incapable of doing further harm. Better yet, he was in a position to repair whatever mischief had been done, for his change of front strengthened our cause not only by adding to our forces but also through its effect upon those who had been banking on the defection of his corps.

Our entrée, our claims to a hearing and success, were grounded on nothing but the army's show of a united front. Unhappily, this moral force, backed by the strength that we were believed to have still at our disposal in the field, was France's last defence—at once the anchor of her freedom and her safety. A word, a gesture, a single step in the presence of men so intent upon our behaviour . . . and all might be lost. Let the marshal think that the whole affair might be overlooked, leave the generals under the impression that we thought the marshal alone had compromised himself—there lay the wisest course. If the outcome has proven otherwise, the fault was none of ours. That outcome was the result of circumstances which nobody could have foreseen. There

[1] Cf. Fain, *Manuscrit de* 1814, 380, and Belliard, *Mémoires*, I, 186. Fain says that Souham obtained 2,000 écus from the Emperor; Belliard says 40,000 francs.

was no time then for reflexion, nor any other way to proceed. Everything came with a rush: mischances, confidences, our departure—and the consequences. The run of bad luck that dogged our cause in those days made the gamble turn out otherwise than we were compelled to count on. And the blame must be laid to that fatality; for in a revolution the slightest events, being unforeseen, almost invariably bring man's sagacity to naught.

The arresting of the Duke of Ragusa's negotiations was the only way to repair the damage he had done. We were forced to believe, therefore, that all the mischief that was afoot at the time of our arrival had been checked and its completion prevented.

The truce-bearer finally brought word of our admission, and we went on our way.[1] Ragusa accompanied us to Chevilly; he made a third in my carriage.[2] As we neared the Austrian field-headquarters, and consequently the moment of explanation, he doubtless found himself more embarrassed than he had thought. We were free to draw that conclusion, at any rate, for when we got down he remained in the carriage —in order, so he told us, that his presence and his altered decision might lend no bias to the manner in which we were first received.

Prince Schwarzenberg, to whom we briefly imparted the purpose of our mission, gave us a suitable reception and informed us that as soon as he had heard of our errand he had sent word of it to the Tsar, in order to avoid any delay. A

[1] The plenipotentiaries left Essonnes between 5.30 and 6 p.m., April 4, after having dined with Marmont. (Rapetti, *La Défection de Marmont*, 350: Fabvier's answers to Gourgaud's questionnaire.)

[2] Caulaincourt says Chevilly, but one should read Petit-Bourg instead. According to Macdonald (*Souvenirs*, 271), Caulaincourt rode with Ney, Marmont with Macdonald; they were in two separate carriages. For greater convenience in negotiating, Schwarzenberg had moved into the Château de Petit-Bourg which, for the past two days, had served as headquarters for the Crown Prince of Wurttemberg, in command of the Fourth Corps of the Grand Army of Bohemia.

moment or two later there was a summons for him, and he left us.[1]

Macdonald then went up to call on the Crown Prince of Württemberg, who was ill in the château, which was his headquarters. After a quarter of an hour, while on his way down to rejoin us, he went out to the carriages to see if Ragusa were still there; Macdonald wished to have a few words with the duke about what the Prince of Württemberg had been telling him. He learned that Ragusa had got down a minute or two after we did, and had gone to call on Schwarzenberg. Macdonald then returned to the room where we were, and Schwarzenberg followed almost on his heels. Soon afterwards, Ragusa burst in, telling us as he came that everything was arranged; the Generalissimo had understood his motives; what had passed between them was as though it never had happened.[2] He even had a pronounced air of satisfaction. During the general conversation that ensued, and in the course of which there would be some mention, now and again, of the Essonnes negotiations and of our errand, the Austrian spoke not a word of recrimination.

Matters seemingly were arranged as the duke had told us;

[1] "Upon our drawing level with the Château de Petit-Bourg, he (Ragusa) remarked that we were turning into the approach; he shivered. 'What inconvenience do you see in that?' said I. He replied, 'It is the headquarters of the Allied advance-guard, commanded by the Crown Prince of Wurttemberg.' 'Well, what of it?' 'The fact is that the treaty was made with him; and suppose he insists that it be carried out?' 'In that case, stay in the carriage. I will inform the two other commissioners as soon as we stop.'" (Macdonald, *Souvenirs*, 271.)

[2] "As soon as he (Marmont) perceived our astonishment, he walked over to me, very *dégagé*, and smiling as if there were a great load off his mind. He told us that without revealing his identity, he had learned from people around the château that the Generalissimo had arrived there ahead of us, and that the Crown Prince had just retired to his own apartment. He had then hit upon the idea of asking to see Prince Schwarzenberg, and he had begged him to take no action upon the signed agreement, now that we, his comrades, were about to negotiate on behalf of the entire army . . . whereat the Generalissimo had gladly consented." (Macdonald, *Souvenirs*, 273.)

the Generalissimo even had an air which suggested that he was taking this change like an honest man who sees that here is a suitable offer which leaves nothing further to be said. Save for what Macdonald was in haste to tell me, it would have entered nobody's head to retain the least suspicion. Eventually, seeing how embarrassing the Duke of Ragusa's position was, we avoided any topic that might even touch upon this unfortunate negotiation.

For my part, I tried to have a word with Schwarzenberg by himself, in order to sound his views and judge whether, as the Emperor fondly hoped, he would be mollified by the sacrifices which His Majesty was prepared to make. He seemed particularly anxious for the arrival of the reply from Paris that would rid him of us, and he invented some business to call him away. I followed him. Since he was unable then to escape me, he came back into the room, hoping no doubt that there he might more readily avoid what he knew very well that I would say to him. We were off in a corner. I spoke to him of our errand on behalf of the Regency; of the Emperor's and Her Majesty's letters to the Emperor Francis; of his Cabinet's good reason to support us. As an Austrian, I told Schwarzenberg, he ought to be eager for the adoption of a Regency that would be wholly within their sphere of influence; with the Emperor Napoleon removed from political affairs by his own consent, whatever was done now for France would be to Austria's advantage. He scarcely listened to me. If I had been less insistent, he might not have answered me at all. Since he could not ignore me altogether, he told me that he had had news from the Emperor his master and from Metternich, and that they would soon be at hand. This bit of information eased my mind a little. It was a hope . . . but it was short-lived; for the Generalissimo, profiting by the occasion, said to me: "It was you who put us into an alliance from which we will not withdraw; the interests of Europe must be safeguarded now. The time to make peace was when peace was possible"—and he broke away from me.

I rejoined Macdonald, who thereupon gave me a detailed

account of what the Prince of Württemberg had told him.[1] Macdonald had it on the prince's word of honour that the arrangement, which Ragusa had repeatedly assured us was incomplete, had most certainly been concluded, and that the marshal and his corps were going over to the Allies.

Was this merely a device for avoiding the first embarrassment of a public explanation? *Had* he frankly declared that the negotiations were off—that he was joining forces with us? Was he betraying us? These reflexions caused us grave concern. Macdonald added that he had had some words with Ragusa, taxing him outright with what he had learned and expressing his horror at this secret *démarche*; but once more the duke had denied that there was any definite arrangement. He had made his explanation to Schwarzenberg as promised, said he,[2] and all was broken off. To offend him with fresh suspicions would not mend matters and would make him shy away from us: how could one doubt him after such positive assertions? He had perhaps meant to act the rôle of General Monk; but for him to go hand in glove with Schwarzenberg to trick us, when it lay within his power to elude us and act overtly upon his original plan—our reason refused to entertain the possibility of such treachery on the part of a man so honourable till then.

A few minutes later I accosted the duke and asked him several pertinent questions. He replied affirmatively, just as

[1] Macdonald, in his *Souvenirs*, 273, makes no mention of his private interview with the Prince of Württemberg. On the contrary, he says that the latter gave the plenipotentiaries a very cool reception and disappeared after a few moments, to return no more. However, he spoke in confidence to Belliard, who quotes him thus: "I called on the Prince of Wurttemberg, who told me in that conversation that Marmont's corps was going to desert us and come over to them. I remarked to the Prince that that was simply in the air: he assured me that all Marmont's wishes had been met, and that everything was settled, understood, and concluded; and he gave me his word on it." (Belliard, *Mémoires*, I, 187.)

[2] Continuing Macdonald's account: "I repeated my conversation with the Prince of Wurttemberg to Marmont. He swore to me again that there was nothing to it." (Belliard, *Mémoires*, I, 189.)

he already had done to Macdonald, and before that in the presence of him and of Ney, to whom we related these details and our consequent anxiety.

The despatch-officer returned from Paris an hour before midnight. Ragusa told us that Schwarzenberg thought it would be a good thing for him to explain his change of front to the Tsar Alexander. So, before returning to his corps, he would go along with us to Paris and tell the Tsar that he was not leaving our cause at all. He had informed his generals, said he, that everything was arranged with Schwarzenberg and was regarded as though it had not taken place; that his corps must not budge. The carriages were ready; nobody objected or paid attention to this change of procedure, which seemed advantageous and natural enough. Marshal Ney gave Ragusa a place in his carriage, and we arrived at about three in the morning.[1]

[1] April 5. The hour Caulaincourt gives is later than that accepted by most historians. Pasquier (*Mémoires*, II, 304) reports that it was "about midnight" when the marshals were ushered in to Alexander. Rovigo (*Mémoires*, V, 12) says 11 p.m. It will be noticed that according to Caulaincourt, the envoy to Paris did not return to Petit-Bourg until 11 p.m., April 4; moreover, that according to Macdonald (*Souvenirs*, 271), Schwarzenberg sat down to table at about ten or eleven o'clock, and that the Frenchmen shared his meal. It appears to us, therefore, that the hour given by Caulaincourt is the most nearly probable. Assuming that the plenipotentiaries set out from Petit-Bourg between eleven o'clock and midnight, it would take their carriages a good three hours to reach the Rue Saint-Florentin, a distance of approximately thirty kilometres, over blocked roads.

CHAPTER VI

Second Mission to Paris

THE Tsar was waiting for us. He received us immediately and greeted us with great kindliness. He paid us high compliments for the army and ourselves, and he even expressed a lively concern over the Emperor's position.[1] We announced the purpose of our mission, and that we came provided with the necessary powers and bearing the declaration of abdication.

We made an emphatic statement of all the advantages offered by the Regency, both for the internal stability of France and for the peace of Europe—two ends which he could gain to his own advantage and through a stroke of the pen, by no longer risking the chances of war at a time when his position at Paris gave us some preponderance in the military sense. We emphasized the marked desire of France and of the army to retain the Emperor's dynasty which, above all others, would be able to safeguard our interests; next, the army's determination to remain true to its oath; and we stressed the retention of the national cockade which had been the rallying-sign of our glory and should remain our comfort in misfortune. With marked intent, we stressed the fact that the army's united front could not be broken; that the Emperor's steadfastness had rallied all the leaders, and that we were all casting our lots together—witness the Duke of Ragusa, who likewise was declaring common cause with us. The intrigues of sundry individuals in Paris, we continued, were but the expression of a few private interests. The country's

[1] "He begged us first of all to hear what he had to say to us, and on that score, speaking warmly and in chivalrous terms, he expressed admiration for the French forces." (Macdonald, *Souvenirs*, 274.)

wish—the true desire of the departments of France and the Parisian majority, too—was to preserve the Imperial dynasty. We attacked repeatedly on this point and the cockade, begging the Tsar to ponder our remarks with care and not be misled by deceitful innuendoes.

We added that the Bourbons, whose claims were being put forward, could bring nothing back to France except their prejudices and the hatred resulting from the misfortunes inflicted on them by the Revolution. Since they, like so many others, had been its victims, one could not expect that they would foster the institutions, the fruits, the interests that had grown out of it; and since none of us had participated in that Revolution, he could not possibly attribute our views to bias. We called to his attention that, since we had been with the troops throughout those unfortunate times, we had not the slightest personal motive for defending the crimes and blunders then perpetrated. On the contrary, like proper Frenchmen whose sole guide, whose only motive, was their country's welfare—the desire to see her peaceable, happy, and in concord with the principles of other States, not merely with their personal interests—it was our belief that what France needed was a government that would have no bitter memories to recall, and no reason for delving into an unhappy past. What we needed was a government whose whole concern it would be to preserve whatever fine and useful things the Revolution had produced: in short, a government whose men would make it their pride to maintain that coalition of all parties which the Emperor had happily re-established. We reverted over and over to the cockade, adding that the one which certain persons already had come out with was an affront to the nation and the troops.

We remarked that the Regency, by the very nature of such a government, would offer more security than any other to persons who had compromised themselves within recent days. We added that we, like the army as a whole, were standing by our oaths; nor could Their Allied Majesties impute this to us for a fault, since it ought to be furthest from Their Majesties' interest to encourage soldiers and civilians to be

faithless in that respect—let alone to be their advisers in such procedure. In conclusion, we stated that the army was ready to do battle in support of the wish that we were expressing; nor could it be to the interest of the Allies to drive the army to desperation by refusing the peace we brought and the conditions they themselves had desired. As we put it, this present peace ought to be all the more attractive to them because they could have it now, on the spot, when it would fulfil the wishes of all right-thinking men.

The Tsar asked again whether the Emperor had consented to abdicate. "In favour of his son," was our answer, which was well received. His objections over the difficulty of revoking the Senate's proclamation of dethronement were but feeble, and their tone was far from suggesting that here was any real obstacle.[1] He listened attentively to our demands, discussed several of them receptively, chatted, reasoned about everything, raised objections only over trifles, and dismissed us by saying that he would receive us at noon,[2] after he had conferred with the King of Prussia and his allies' ministers.[3]

The Duke of Ragusa had declared, as promised, that he

[1] "'The Tsar accepted our proposals, and apparently everything was settled.'" (Belliard, *Mémoires*, I, 189: Macdonald's account.) "According to virtually all sources, Alexander was swayed." (H. Houssaye, 1814, 613). It should be pointed out that Henry Houssaye has confused the night conference with that held at noon, April 5. The fact, which has sometimes been denied, that the latter conference took place, emerges clearly from Caulaincourt's account, as it already has from Macdonald's.

[2] Macdonald (*Souvenirs*, 277) says 9 a.m. The second conference actually took place at a little past noon, April 5. Nevertheless, since Caulaincourt presently notes that the appointed time for the meeting had passed before the plenipotentiaries went to it, and since Macdonald adds that they were awaiting a summons to start for Alexander's, it is possible that, as Macdonald says, the appointment as made during the night was for nine o'clock.

[3] It will be noted that Caulaincourt, like Macdonald, says nothing of an interruption in the conference, during which, according to Pasquier (*Mémoires*, II, 304), the Tsar is supposed to have consulted the Provisional Government.

was making common cause with us.[1] The Tsar had looked a little surprised to see him at our side.

Upon leaving the Tsar's [at 5 a.m., April 5], Macdonald, Ney, and I made an appointment to meet at noon at Ney's house, which was near Macdonald's, not far from Alexander's headquarters, and therefore most convenient for our meetings.

Schwarzenberg's final words, the Tsar's mention of the dethronement pronounced by the Senate, the exclusion of His Majesty's family pronounced in the declarations of the Allies—these, and the defections besides, weighed heavy on my mind despite our good reception by Alexander. Disunion had imperilled us, making it all too clear to our enemies how restive was the mood, and how easily played upon. Our enemies were adroit, subtle, unscrupulous in the means they employed. The Senate had turned over the country upon no security; the Duke of Ragusa had been at the point of delivering up the army and his benefactor. France's one remaining hope was her army, which the invaders still treated with respect because they thought it united. What would they think of it now? Only yesterday they walked in fear of it because at any moment the country might awaken to its own perils, the capital to its own interests, and both of them rally to the army's support. What was there left now to stand against the enemy? In order to be strong, it was necessary to seem united—and we no longer were so. If this was no foreboding of misfortunes to follow, I at least felt it to be such. During the conversation with Alexander, Marshal Ney had let slip some words about the ambition, the thirst for glory, the blindness of the Emperor Napoleon—all of which was admirably calculated to call the army's unity in question and raise doubts as to whether its chiefs were wholly devoted to His Majesty's defence.[2] The marshal was right, undoubtedly;

[1] Marmont's presence at this discussion has been disputed, notably by H. Houssaye (1814, 612). Caulaincourt's account, coinciding with Marmont's statement (*Mémoires*, IV, 362) that he was there, removes all doubt in the matter, despite Macdonald's silence.

[2] "Marshal Ney was the first to speak up, saying some pretty sensible things and much that was beside the point." (Macdonald, *Souvenirs*, 276.)

but to concede the faults of the man whom he had come to defend—to grant them, moreover, in the presence of our enemies and at the very start—did this not suggest a separation between the Emperor's interests and the country's? Ney's frankness, the warmth of his emotions, had misled him and robbed us already of a portion of our strength. Our whole power now consisted in the blind devotion which it was believed that we felt for the one man who could actually lead us once more into battle. The invaders had to be threatened with that battle in order to wring any concession from them. The Emperor was blameworthy, to be sure, and on more counts than one. Be that as it might, there were tongues enough to find fault with him: in that chorus of condemnation the voices of his plenipotentiaries were out of place. I had noted the instant impression made upon the Tsar by Ney's involuntary outburst against the Emperor's abuse of force and of France's devotion and her sacrifices. I foresaw at once that this opinion, unquestionably fair but indiscreetly uttered in such surroundings, would make our transactions no easier. If our claims were to carry weight, it was necessary, as I have said, that our army should be thought ready to its leader's hand, firmly bound and wholly devoted to him, and prepared to give battle for him, win or die.

What could we do against the armies of Allied Europe, when it was credible and in a measure proven that we no longer spoke with full authority in our army's victorious name? I retired to sleep with these painful reflexions; a sad presentiment, doubtless, of what was afoot elsewhere, to the disgrace of the name of "Frenchman." And the poor Emperor! What must have been his state of mind that night, when he knew himself betrayed by the man who, so he thought, was most worthy of his trust!

When it was day, I went out and gleaned a few particulars which revived my hopes a little. In his conversations with various persons of note—even with certain of them who, in spirit, were at one with the Restoration which was being engineered—the Tsar had not declared himself exclusively in favour of the Bourbons. Like many a Frenchman, he

was of the opinion, which he did not trouble to conceal, that those princes would be so hampered by passion and prejudice that they could not possibly rally all parties to their support and keep the peace in France. He even agreed that there was very little sentiment in their favour—that it would seem as if some other arrangement would have to be reached for the sake of Europe's future repose. To be sure, he said in so many words that the Emperor was out of the question; but he, Alexander, was amenable to any alternative, any other arrangement, that might be the people's choice. The expectations of the Provisional Government, it appeared, had been dashed and utterly confounded by the Duke of Ragusa's change of face. That news and word of our approach had arrived simultaneously the night before, spreading alarm through the faction,[1] and decidedly altering Their Majesties' views.

Such, I was told, had been the state of affairs on the night of April 4. On the other hand, all that we learned about the behaviour of French officialdom, not to speak of many a private individual's, was discouraging; nor had we much hope of success after what we discovered about the letters and news-items received by their families from generals and officers in the field—for Paris knew better what went on in the army than did we who were there. The whole of officialdom had come out for Restoration and Louis XVIII. The men for whom the Emperor had done the most were betraying him and his dynasty by virtue of the very offices for which they had him to thank. In his misfortune, it was simply a question of seeing who could abandon him the quickest for the sake of the new fortunes in prospect.

We met at Ney's house for breakfast at 11.30.[2] As we

[1] "We learned (at Ney's) that our arrival had struck terror into the partisans of the new dispensation; more than two thousand white cockades had dropped from as many hats." (Macdonald, *Souvenirs*, 279.)

[2] Here again, Caulaincourt's narrative, taken together with Fabvier's note as printed farther on, aids in establishing the truth about a point which has remained very obscure until now: What time was it when Marmont was informed of the carrying out of

Continued on next page

were about to rise from table and go to the Tsar's, the Duke of Ragusa turned up. He voiced his regrets to us yet again, assuring us that he had given the strictest orders to his generals. Upon leaving Austrian field-headquarters, so he told us, he had sent his aide to renew those orders and inform his staff that he had seen Prince Schwarzenberg, and that all was broken off. While he was bearing witness to his satisfaction over that rupture, and over his having rejoined our cause, word was brought that an officer wished to see him.

Crestfallen, barely able to speak, he returned a few minutes later. M. Fabvier, his chief aide-de-camp, had come to tell him that in all likelihood his army corps, left behind under General Souham's orders, had passed through the Austrian outposts during the night, and had gone to take up the position agreed upon in yesterday's broken understanding with the enemy. Fabvier had done his best to induce Generals Souham and Bordessoulle to wait at our outposts for orders. They had practically promised that they would do so; but the aide would not care to say that they had advanced no farther—not in view of the uneasiness they showed concerning the Emperor's intentions, and about the temper of the rank and file if word of this movement were passed along.

Stupefied at this news, powerless to speak a word, all stared at each other—and then everybody asked for details. Was there any way of undoing the harm? Had the treachery been carried through? The Duke of Ragusa himself was apparently

the desertion which he had arranged? In his reply to Gourgaud's questionnaire, Fabvier says that he rejoined Marmont at Ney's at one o'clock in the morning. That is an impossibility, since at that hour the troop-movement had scarcely begun. In his note, Fabvier gives a better explanation of what had taken place, and his account substantiates Caulaincourt's. It appears that Fabvier, upon arriving in Paris at 8.30, went first to Marmont's in the rue de Paradis, then to Ney's in the rue de Lille, then to Talleyrand's in the rue Saint-Florentin, and that he found the marshal only when he returned to Ney's a second time. These various excursions through a city choked with troops could very easily have delayed him until far into the morning. And again, there is Macdonald's confirmation that Ragusa was sent for during the breakfast at Ney's.

ill posted about what had come to pass. For a moment he was barely articulate, exclaiming, "I am disgraced! . . . I am lost! . . . What a crime! . . . I can never get over it! . . . That such a thing should happen! Souham has disobeyed me—he has betrayed his trust! . . . I ordered him not to leave his position. . . . All is lost. . . . What a disgrace! . . . He has gone over to the enemy with my corps, in spite of my explicit orders to the contrary, even at Essonnes—even before the Austrians were told of it. . . . I am going to rejoin my forces and try to put everything right. . . ."

We demanded that he let us see the officer who had brought these particulars. We called him in, and he confirmed what his marshal had been telling us. Fabvier was in despair. He was visibly angry, scornful, at a loss for words to express his feelings over the shameful act of treason which he had to report. Here are the details of that calamitous event as he outlined them to us, and as we afterwards filled them in at Fontainebleau and Paris.

The Emperor—desirous, naturally, to know how things stood with the troops, and to still the anxiety of certain uneasy minds by giving out word of our mission—kept his orderlies posting continually up and down the whole line, so as to have fresh news every instant. The chief orderly, M. Gourgaud, whose usual duty it was to inspect the outposts, had been despatched to the Duke of Ragusa to learn if there was any news from Paris. When he found the duke absent, he applied to Colonel Fabvier, who was at headquarters. Fabvier told him that the duke had gone off with the plenipotentiaries and had not yet returned,[1] but that he would

[1] In his "Statement" (*Bourrienne et ses erreurs*, II, 334), Gourgaud says that "it was nightfall" when he reached Souham's, after leaving Fabvier. The letter inviting the generals to Napoleon's headquarters at ten o'clock that evening (*Archives historique de la guerre*: Berthier; and *Correspondance de Napoléon*, 21553) appears to have been delivered to Souham between 6 and 7 p.m. Gourgaud was under orders to confirm this invitation. When he arrived at Souham's headquarters, the general already had received the letter; and it was his consequent trepidation that led to his refusal to see Gourgaud.

supply an orderly to show the way to the quarters of General Souham, who commanded the army corps in the duke's absence. Gourgaud had been commissioned to bid Souham to dinner with the Emperor, wherefore he went to see the general. Whether because Souham was out, or because he was unwilling to be seen, Gourgaud did not find him. He charged the general's officers, however, to convey the Emperor's invitation to him instantly. General Souham, fearful lest the negotiations with Schwarzenberg had come to the Emperor's knowledge and that he himself was compromised, took fright at the invitation. This mark of His Majesty's favour was entirely natural, considering that the general had approached him forty-eight hours before to request—and receive—a gratuity. But to Souham the invitation seemed a snare, a means of luring him to Fontainebleau for arrest. Thereupon, instead of running for cover like the Duke of Ragusa (whose departure for that reason he saw fit to condemn), he thought solely of turning this circumstance to his own enrichment. His one idea was to make a merit of misleading the brave fellows under his command—of betraying their confidence in him.

With this deceitful intent, he confided his fears and his plans to General Bordessoulle and to such of his other comrades as he thought he could influence. What had happened to him, he told them, was a sign of real and pressing danger to them all. They were ready enough to believe as Souham wished; their consciences were uneasy because they had not opposed the marshal's prior intrigues. They suddenly decided to put their troops in motion, cross the river with them, halt near the enemy's outposts, and wait there for a reply from the Austrian commander, to whom they would send a demand for the carrying out of the agreement made yesterday and broken last evening. The brigadiers, the officers, the men all were ignorant of their destination. They thought they were marching against the foe. Generals Lucotte and Chastel, two gallant fellows who had refused any part in the earlier breach of faith, were not apprized of the movement: their brigade remained alone at the post of honour. Souham, senior general

of division of the armies of France, led the Sixth Corps away without warning the Duke of Ragusa, whom he censured for taking shelter and leaving them to bear the brunt—as if he too could not have run to cover without betraying France, the Emperor, and his comrades by misleading brave fellows who, all unsuspicious as they were, had shared nothing of his weakness, and so deserved better than to be the victims of his treachery.

Fabvier heard of this from General Digeon at about 2 a.m.,[1] when the troops were already on the march. According to all accounts, he betook himself to the head of the column in an effort to halt the movement and dissuade General Souham and the rest of them from following out their course before some news had come from the duke. When Fabvier saw that he could accomplish nothing in that quarter, he called upon them to stop short of the bridge where he had found them, and to wait there for orders or a reply from the Duke of Ragusa, whom he was on his way to seek.[2] With that hope

[1] Here again, Caulaincourt's testimony, corroborated by Fabvier's note, clears up a highly controversial point. Marmont, in his *Mémoires*, VI, 264, says that the troops were put in motion at 4 a.m. H. Houssaye (1814, 618) has shown the impossibility of that, and surmises that the hour was midnight. Now, as we have seen, the plenipotentiaries did not leave Petit-Bourg until sometime between eleven and twelve o'clock, wherefore, if Marmont's corps had begun to move at midnight, the Allies would have had word of that movement before the envoys' departure. The hour here given by Caulaincourt makes it possible to explain the whole chronological sequence of events. On the strength of this evidence, then, it is admissible for one to say that the columns started on the march shortly after two in the morning.

[2] "At midnight one of the marshal's servants came into the salon and asked me if I had no orders to give; there was talk of leaving. I told him not to fret: if there were any orders, they would be brought to me. I got up off the sofa. I opened the window, from which I saw the fires of the outposts. There I stayed for fifteen minutes without hearing a sound. I was unwilling to go out and thus make it necessary to look for me. The army was bivouacked three-quarters of a mile to the rear.

"At 1,30 or 2 a.m. I was lying on the sofa, sword buckled. General Digeon, commanding artillery, came in. I had a book

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in mind, he left them and made all haste to bring the marshal warning of what was afoot. However, it was nearly eight o'clock before he reached Paris, after being delayed by the succession of escorting officers assigned to him at enemy posts along the way. The Duke of Ragusa, he found, was not at home—whereupon Fabvier searched vainly for him from one house to another, until he ran across him at Ney's and there informed us of this catastrophe.

The Duke of Ragusa expressed the intention of halting the movement and leading the troops back again if there still were time. Could anybody delude himself into thinking that the

in my hand, but I was not reading. 'Well, well!' said he, putting on an air of surprise and mystification; 'aren't you starting? Aren't you moving the headquarters?' 'Where to?' I asked him, leaping to my feet. 'But the army is marching.' 'Marching to where?' 'That is all settled,' he told me, starting for the door. 'I'm off to my guns. You will find the generals at the bridge.' I followed him. As I crossed the courtyard, where my horses were picketed around a tree, I told a bugler to bridle my best mount for me and follow me across the bridge. It was all I could do to make my way on foot through the mass of infantry, which was in column. I could scarcely thrust the bayonets aside. The palisade that blocked off the bridge was only half destroyed. From the bearing of the men it was easy to see that they thought they were going into battle. They were resigned, rather than eager or desperate.

"Fifty paces from the bridge, beside a house to the left, I saw a group gathered around a big fire. There were Generals Souham, Bordessoulle, Campans, et cetera. I asked them where we were going and why I had received no orders. At first General Souham replied, in a tone wavering between hesitation and authority, that that was all settled. When I pressed for an answer and told him that the marshal himself, as he got into the carriage, had assured me there was to be no movement whatever, Souham replied bluntly: 'Monsieur le marechal has put himself out of harm's reach. We mean to do the same. Tall as I am,' he added, 'I don't intend to be a head shorter.' 'If you think,' I told him, 'that the marshal has gone to seek his own safety, do as he did. Get out yourself, and leave the army.' General Compans then spoke up. In view of Napoleon's abdication, he told me, it was useless and perhaps dangerous to leave him any troops; he might change his mind and plunge us into some final disaster." (Extract from Fabvier's note, autograph, *Archives de Caulaincourt*, file 13.)

generals would keep their promise to Colonel Fabvier? That men who had deceived their troops in that fashion would wait for orders from the duke? We were soon to have proof at the Tsar Alexander's that the surrender was complete and the damage irremediable. But let us not get ahead of the story.

When announcing the fatal turn of events, the duke had cried out to us, "I am ruined! . . . I am in despair! . . . What a blunder! . . . I can never get over it! . . . Southam has betrayed his trust! The shame of it! . . . The Sixth Corps—he has led it off contrary to my express command. . . . He has taken it over to the enemy; I will go back to it and try to put everything right." He seemed overwhelmed, in short, and he reproached himself as bitterly as one could wish. We had every reason for sharing his dejection—but how different were our motives!

If, after last night's audience, we cherished any gleams of hope, this occurrence extinguished them all: the army was disunited. The troops were divided despite themselves, to be sure, but they were all the weaker on that account; that which we had hoped to save was slipping from us; the full consequences of this event were plain to be seen.

The Emperor no longer had the means of giving battle, the enemy could be of no two minds about it. Consequently, we had lost the one prop that supported our negotiations. The ice was breaking up on every side. All that remained for us, as we could readily foresee, was to do the victor's bidding in our turn.

It was past time for our appointment; we would have to go to the Tsar's. The duke took leave of us with the professed intention of mending the irreparable. So heavy was the load on his conscience that he was doubtless in a hurry to escape from our very sight. Situated as he was in the midst of the enemy's army, how could he take even a step unescorted? Could he think it possible that they would pass him through to lead his corps back to Essonnes? . . . If his treachery was the result of his ambition, who will dare to absolve him for it? If it resulted simply, as he said, from what he believed was a

praiseworthy scheme, serviceable to the country and necessary to the preservation of the Emperor's life, then he must be grieving himself to death over the consequences that have followed upon it. For to his charge France can lay the greater portion of her present woes, the soldiery can lay the disgrace of the uniform they wear, and his benefactor . . . but enough of this. Posterity's verdict has been anticipated by his contemporaries.

A note addressed to me by Nesselrode brought word that the Tsar was expecting us. This meant that we were late; but we were already in the carriage.

The Tsar received us as cordially as before. He made us repeat our proposals, to which he listened in the same friendly manner, although he did draw attention to the possible advantages afforded by the Senate's declaration of dethronement and the stand already taken by Bordeaux.[1] He stressed the difficulty of revoking acts and decrees of that nature, but his tone was far from dictatorial; rather, he conveyed the impression that he was a counsellor, and that in his opinion he was suggesting a procedure more expedient than that which we had intended to follow.

Again, as during the night, Alexander assured us that the Allied Sovereigns were less than willing to saddle France with any government that did not suit her. He revived this topic, said he, because there were Senators and personages of note—strangers, all of them, to the current dispute—who looked upon Restoration as the common-sense solution, the compromise that would conciliate all parties. We ruled out these suggestions and declared that the Emperor had abdicated only in favour of his son; that nothing in the world could induce France and the troops to renounce the Imperial dynasty, which offered far better security for everyone. So emphatic were we that there was no question of refuting our opinions: our viewpoint was allowed, and the discussion was proceeding on that basis when one of Alexander's staff announced the arrival of a despatch-officer from the Generalissimo. The

[1] Lynch, the mayor, had had Louis XVIII proclaimed at Bordeaux on March 12.

Tsar asked what he wished, and the aide replied in Russian: "To inform you that the Duke of Ragusa's corps came over to us this morning, and that it is in front of our lines." After what we had already learned, I caught the scent from the marshal's name, and thereupon the little smattering of Russian that had stayed by me came to my assistance in interpreting the announcement. As the Tsar stepped across to his aide-de-camp, I whispered to Macdonald: "Bad news. . . . We are lost. . . . He knows everything."[1]

The Tsar turned back to us, added a few perfunctory words, and hurried from the room, doubtless in order to find out for himself what details had been brought from field-headquarters. He re-entered shortly, and straightway, as we had sadly foreboded during his brief absence, it was plain for us to see that all was changed. The Tsar gave the appearance of picking up the conversation from where he had dropped it, but he lost no time in telling us that a regency offered not the slightest assurance of repose for France—that a regency would resolve itself into factions which its authority would be inadequate to suppress. Austria, he continued, was at one with the other powers in desiring the stabilization of France under a unified government—a state of affairs which would guarantee our internal peace, and consequently the repose of Europe which would be contingent upon it. Thereupon he referred dogmatically to the Senate's decision, to the dethronement, and to the popular will, which last he considered

[1] Pasquier says that Alexander had the word at daybreak (*Mémoires*, II, 311). Macdonald, in his *Souvenirs*, 279, fixes this incident at the close of the conference the night before, but, in the account which he gave Belliard, following his return to Fontainebleau, he agrees with Caulaincourt in saying that it occurred during the early afternoon conference (Belliard, *Mémoires*, 189). Koch (*Campagne de* 1814, II, 590), also concurs in this. It is possible, however, that, as would seem to be the sense of Pasquier's relation (*Mémoires*, II, 311), there may have been two couriers despatched from Allied field-headquarters; that one of them announcing Souham's decision, reached Paris during the night of April 5, and the other, confirming the execution of the movement in detail, arrived shortly after the following noon. It would be of this latter that Caulaincourt speaks here.

manifestly in favour of the Bourbons. He talked again about the situation in the Midi, which already had come out for them, and about the impossibility of retracing the steps that had been taken, or of altering what the Senate and various assemblies had done. He spoke, too, of the necessity for conciliation all round, if, as was vital to us, the existing state of things were to be kept unchanged. Our rights, he assured us, and our laws, our institutions, our respective offices, our social rank, all would be guaranteed us. Not only would the Tricolour cockade be preserved—it would be adopted gladly by the Bourbons, who would assume it as the rallying-sign of our national glory. They already had worn it, and therefore would not have the slightest interest in changing it. This, said he, was one of the consequences of a quarter of a century of revolutionary developments against which there was not the slightest idea of reacting: the Bourbons' own interests would dictate that they preserve the national cockade.

He spoke of the restoration of the Bourbons as an unavoidable consequence of the logic of events. As in his talks with me, so now he referred to those princes as a necessary inconvenience, the alternative to harsher terms. It was his assured belief that they had changed for the better; that so protracted a misfortune was a good schooling for men in general. As for himself, he added, he had borne no part in their return. He formerly had done more than anybody else to prevent their coming to Allied headquarters, and to-day he was proposing them to us for the sole reason that the situation had altered, thus leading him to believe that their return was for our own good. He was speaking his past thoughts to us as frankly as his present ones, in order that we might clearly understand that our best interest was his only guide. And lastly: abiding by their promises, neither he nor his allies claimed the right to impose anything upon France. His injunction to her was limited to this: "Take stock of your position, weigh carefully what is most profitable for you to do, and then choose." However, since Their Majesties had said that they would have no dealings either with the Emperor or with any member of his family, he, Alexander, was

compelled to tell us that this declaration, which they would not retract, debarred the Regency.

Then the Tsar checked over the list of points which he had made against the Emperor Napoleon during his last conversation, and, when he had listened and replied in friendly fashion to all the drawbacks of Restoration as we pointed them out to him, he summed up by saying that the army was far from sharing the opinion which, in his belief, I was voicing a little too glibly, now that the Sixth Corps had come over to them and had declared itself for the Bourbons. This led to some sort of accounting for the treachery of certain leaders whose perfidy the troops knew nothing of. But still there was the fatal refrain. "The Emperor must abdicate unconditionally. He will be furnished with a living; he will be given an independent State."

We withdrew to go and confer what course to take. We had barely reached the foot of the staircase when the Tsar sent for me to come back. Alexander received me with his invariable kindliness. Everything that he had just told us, he now repeated to me. I argued, protested, and countered his arguments once again with all the effective points just made by us, the sum of which weighed so heavily in the Regency's favour. He listened to me graciously, disputed calmly, advanced arguments to meet mine—but when the balance inclined to my side, he fell back upon the argument that Austria, like the other Powers, would have nothing to do with the Emperor or any of his family. At length he added, "Have you anyone, in France or out, who might be more acceptable to France? Your choice will be uncontested. . . ." I replied that there was no one; that we had not forgotten a word of our oath to the Emperor and his dynasty, and that it would not be so simple as it looked to make France forget her sworn allegiance to the Emperor's son.

After reflecting an instant, the Tsar said, "But would you not agree to Bernadotte, since you say that Bourbons are not wanted? It would seem that he has many friends here."

"He has lost them all," I answered, "by coming here with your bayonets. If it were possible for us to look beyond

France for our choice, Your Majesty knows well enough that we should prefer one of the young grand dukes, your brothers; their education, the affability which Your Majesty has shown here, your generosity—all this would win your brother every heart if there were room in ours for anyone except the King of Rome."

The Tsar's reply was that he never would consent to give us one of his brothers. They had other duties to fulfil. There was no personal motive behind his suggestion; he had made it only for our advantage. But there were persons, he added, whose opinion of Bernadotte differed from mine.

"I think not, Sire," I answered. "My conscience reminds me that we are pledged to the Emperor's son; and my reason, if need be, would warn me thus: even the Bourbons, who have fought against France for nothing but their rights, are preferable to Bernadotte, that king by virtue of the glory purchased with our blood—our enemy now, in the day of peril."

"I am far from disapproving of your sentiments," answered the Tsar. "My frankness proves to you that even though we are unable to grant what you desire, we do not wish, as you say we do, to force your acceptance of what you do not want."

I found myself greatly moved by the part of this conversation dealing with the Emperor's fate and that of the Imperial child who, but four days earlier, had been my country's hope, its very darling. Despite myself, the tears rolled down my cheeks; my heart was bursting with grief and anger. No words of mine can tell how I felt. The Tsar, taking heed of my emotion, was all kindness; he appeared to be moved himself. He then spoke of the Emperor with a concern which seemed to me so unaffected that, as he consoled me, I was nearly tempted to forget whose pleasure it was to dethrone my master. The Tsar assured me anew that I ought to rely on him to do whatever might possibly relieve His Majesty's personal predicament; he would give me his word. When I betrayed fears over what the passions of the Emperor's enemies might lead to, Alexander strove to reassure me by

promising that if it were needful he would furnish every warranty that the Emperor could possibly stand in need of. In this conversation, the Tsar was nobleness and generosity itself. He was the same man whose lofty character I had esteemed in days how different, alas, from these, and in a time less hostile. From this moment forth, it was on Alexander that I centred all my hopes of safeguarding the Emperor, of protecting him, and, if need arose, of mitigating as far as possible whatever harshness his destiny might have in store.

Since matters had come to such a point as this, it was vital that I should be in a position to give the Emperor some facts in support of the words "an independent living." Where? How far away? Worth what? I was preoccupied with all these details for the offsetting of the sad news that we must take to Fontainebleau. Accordingly, I did my best to make the conversation turn upon the question of His Majesty's establishment abroad—and the Tsar kindly fell in with my mood of anxious enquiry. An independent establishment, he repeated, was still understood in the same sense as when he had mentioned it to me in confidence at our last meeting. He thereupon reviewed the list of available concessions. His whole emphasis favoured a remote establishment; mine, a nearer one—and a mild climate in particular. I held out for a fortified spot where, if need arose, the Emperor might take refuge from raids or assassins.

This discussion led up again to the naming of the Island of Elba, which, so it struck me, offered many advantages. The Tsar's only objection to Elba was on the score of its nearness to Italy. However, out of his own anxiety to avoid prolonging the struggle—in his eagerness to see this abdication consented to, since he considered that the Emperor still had resources for opposing it—Alexander did not wholly close that avenue of retreat. In his opinion, Elba would please His Majesty because of its climate and its language. I brought in the name of Corsica as well, although I suspected that the Emperor would not be willing to give the impression that he was despoiling France for his own profit by accepting one of her departments—nor were they likely to let him

have that island. I demanded Sardinia or Corfu; but I saw that solicitude for the prior claims of the House of Savoy would be an insurmountable objection to the one, and that Russia and England would regard the other as too near Greece. At that phase of the discussion, when nothing decisive could be done, the Island of Elba seemed to me the spot for us to choose: it afforded security, and it was less liable to objections than the rest. I therefore decided upon it *in petto*, pending approval from the Emperor, who could have had nothing better—and who would, indeed, have had much less if, later on, this conversation and the prior one had not struck the Tsar as constituting a definite pledge on his part. His good faith led him to stand by his word after the arrival of Metternich and Castlereagh, together with the protests and opposition of the Provisional Government, had stirred up pronounced agitation in favour of an establishment beyond the seas, with stress upon the necessity of transporting His Majesty still farther from France—and from Italy, of which Austria was not willing to forego an inch, thanks to her dread of having him in that neighbourhood.

I rejoined my colleagues. We agreed to call on Schwarzenberg and make one last effort to gain a clear view of Austria's intentions; we requested a conference with him. Meantime, I wrote to the Emperor.[1]

[1] "When circumstances bear witness against men whose case is strengthened by so many services rendered and by so much glory, one refuses even to believe what strikes the eye: if there is no way to absolve them, one seeks consolation for oneself. Whereas only yesterday I was witness to the especial trust which it pleased Your Majesty to put in those who are wounding you most deeply, my dread now is two-fold over the necessity of sending you such painful details. In this chaos of blunders, weaknesses, ingratitude, short-sightedness, and misfortune, turn where one will nothing is to be found but instances for shame and sorrow. Fortune, Sire, and mankind alike betray you. In this situation, contact with Paris will bring more peril day by day; please pay heed to that.

"Would it not be possible for the Empress to rejoin Your Majesty? All oppresses you; wherefore my thoughts turn naturally to whatever may console you." (Caulaincourt to Napoleon: from Paris, April 5, 1814, at 2 p.m. The draft of the full report (*Archives de Caulaincourt*, file 13) runs to eighteen hundred words.)

The Generalissimo, we found, gave us shorter answers than Alexander's, and he was more outspoken than the Tsar in favour of Restoration. We were quickly convinced that we need hope for nothing from that quarter—whereupon we withdrew, prepared to leave Paris as soon as we had had the farewell audience which the Tsar had promised us. Ney's house was to be our rendezvous before the appointed hour; I undertook to find out when that would be. We were not kept waiting. After both sides had repeated the same arguments, Alexander dismissed us with the injunction to return quickly with a definite abdication if we wished to negotiate in the interest of the troops, of France, and of the Emperor Napoleon and his family. Otherwise, the Tsar told us, we could not be received.

CHAPTER VII

At Fontainebleau: The Unconditional Abdication

I returned to Fontainebleau with Macdonald.[1] Ney had preceded us a little. We found him at his quarters, waiting to go on with us to the Emperor, and with Marshal Oudinot and a number of generals already gathered round him. They were greedily consuming what he gave out to them about our mission.[2] Although it was two o'clock in the morning, we reported at the Palace and were announced to His Majesty, who received us.[3] The unfavourable outcome of our mission had been only too predictable, once the desertion of the Sixth Corps and the developments in Paris had been learned of. Prepared though he was for anything, he underwent a moment of stupefaction. However, he quickly found words for his feelings; we returned him his conditional declaration of abdication; and against all that we felt bound to tell him, all that we were charged to repeat to him, he struggled as if it lay within our power or his to change the burden of what we had to relate. In those first moments he strenuously rejected the idea of his absolute abdication. He would find some brave fellows still, said he, who were ready to die with

[1] April 6, 1814. 'We reported at the château immediately upon our arrival. It was one o'clock in the morning." (Macdonald, *Souvenirs*, 282.) H. Houssaye (1814, 630), says that the plenipotentiaries arrived at Fontainebleau between 9 and 10 p.m. He is contradicted on this point not only by Macdonald and Caulaincourt but by Koch, who says 11 p.m.

[2] See Ney's letter in the *Moniteur* of April 7. These two concurring bits of evidence prove that, contrary to H. Houssaye's belief (1814, 631), Ney preceded his two colleagues to Fontainebleau.

[3] "It was very difficult to wake the Emperor and make him get up. Caulaincourt himself had to go into the bedroom and shake him roughly." (Macdonald, *Souvenirs*, 283.)

him. We returned him the declaration containing his conditional abdication in his son's favour, and he dismissed us; we were to go and rest ourselves; he would receive us in the morning.

The Emperor sent for me an instant later. I found him composed; he talked over our late report as if it concerned somebody else. After making me repeat all that had taken place, he asked me to tell him everything I knew about the general state of mind, and he discussed the unpromising mood of his very *entourage*. The course of events at Paris had cut him deep, but Marmont's defection was the worst blow of all.

"These gentry are scoundrels, for the most part," he told me, speaking of the Senate; "they are revolutionists whose characters I whitewashed. The majority have neither decency nor honour. Therefore I never relied on them. They would have been as subservient to Murat as they were to me. I am at a loss, though, to explain the behaviour of some of their number, for several of them are men of principle. Ah! Caulaincourt . . . self-interest, selfishness, always time-serving, cash, ambition—behold the mainsprings of mankind. Talleyrand's conduct I can fathom. He had to betray me if he would save his own hide. He was booked for his rôle; the same town could no longer hold him and Maret both; I had meant to arrest him, and he knew it. But the others—what did they stand to gain by betraying me? What have they in view? Why betray their country? Poor France! how you are being swindled! What a sacrifice of your dearest interests to personal animosity—or to fear, rather! . . . This Duke of Ragusa, deserting with his corps in face of the enemy! And when? At the very moment when an almost certain victory might crown unsainted effort—when we were making Europe rue the day that ever it dared to occupy our capital with our army at its heels. . . . Believe me, Caulaincourt: every French heart in Paris would have responded to our cause. Then the foreigner, the traitor would have found only foes there; the good folk of the countryside the real French, following the Burgundians' example, would have hunted the Russians down like deer.

"Marmont, a man with an education behind him, a man who knows his history, who can see through an intrigue . . . how his ambition has carried him away. What are brains good for? He was my most mediocre general; I have upheld him, stood by him through thick and thin because I believed in his integrity. Brought up in my camp, fed at my table, married by my arrangement,[1] loaded with honours and wealth, he becomes one of France's great men—or one of her most distinguished citizens, at any rate—and the dream of his ambition is to raise himself yet higher, be a second General Monk, play the restorer to a brood repellent alike to French opinion and his proper interests. He has forgotten under what flag he rose from rank to rank, under what roof his youth was spent; he has forgotten that he owes his every distinction to the enchantment of this same Tricolour that now he tramples under foot, decking himself out with the emblem of traitors whom he has fought against for twenty-five years. I was glad when I saw him posted between my enemies and me, because I believed in his loyalty and affection. How mistaken I was! Behold the destiny of monarchs: they cherish vipers. . . . Marmont's corps knew nothing, surely, about where it was being led"

The Emperor asked me if I had learned any details about the effect this treachery had had on the rank and file. I assured him that the men of all ranks, with the exception of a few generals, were ignorant of their destination; that when they found how their leaders had betrayed them, they had been furious, and there had been great difficulty in bringing that corps to order, despite the heavy forces of the enemy on every side.[2] This information seemed to comfort him. His mind dwelt on it far more than on the demand for his abdication; his whole conversation and his every thought seemed to

[1] On April 12, 1798, Marmont had married Anne-Marie-Hortense Perregaux (*b.* Paris, October 18, 1779; *d.* May 25, 1857), a banker's daughter. They separated in 1814. Cf. Jean Lhomer, *Le Banquier Perregaux et sa fille* (Paris, 1926).

[2] The Sixth Corps had mutinied upon its arrival at Versailles. Cf. Rapotti, *La Défection de Marmont*, 180.

centre around that occurrence, to which all his comments brought him back again.

"You find the traitors in the upper reaches of society," he added. "The men whom I have raised the highest are the first to abandon me. The officers, the troops would die for me yet, sword in hand. If I cared to, I could drag this struggle out indefinitely; I would war as a partisan for a month or two, but shortly in line of battle. Before three months were out the balance would be in my favour, for nothing lasts long in France. To-day there is nothing but weariness—no desire but for peace at any price. Within a year the French will be ashamed at having surrendered instead of fighting, at having been delivered up to Bourbons and Russians. Then everybody will come running to my camp—but meantime France would be plundered by the invaders, and several of her departments would be given over to the horrors of civil war. . . . I asked her to make sacrifices for her own glory, for the sake of the splendid future I was providing for her: I will have her make no sacrifices on my account. Even the Parisians will soon tire of Alexander's affability; they will grow bored there with the sight of nothing but foreign uniforms; they will finally recall that they are Frenchmen; it will dawn on them that these foreigners are enemies—that it was a disgrace to be taken in by them. Marmont, who is dastardly enough to preen himself to-day over the saving of Paris, and who will no doubt pose as the saviour of France as well, will be anathema to her."

The Emperor reviewed the whole list of events which had come to pass. He commented on every factor in his predicament, speaking of how little reliance he could place in most of the generals, and of how opinion already was being swayed by developments in Paris—though more especially by the Allied proclamation [of April 1] in which his interests were declared separate from those of France.[1] That document, he remarked, was having far more effect on men's minds than was the Senate's dethronement of him, since that body had not had a quorum for the discussion and was held, moreover,

[1] See page 82, note 1.

in such slight esteem that no intelligent man would feel there was any weight behind its action, at which he himself would have laughed louder than anyone if the Sixth Corps' departure had not prevented him from giving battle. He concluded, however, that the net result of these circumstances was gravely prejudicial to his authority.

"I shall have only a fraction of the officers," he told me, "and that includes the Guard as well as the Line—though of course I shall hold the greater part of the men. But there still are many who will start for home if I fall back along the Loire.[1] What then? If I resist, it means civil war for France. I love France too well for that. I have cared only for her glory; I will not work her harm. I will not have this fair land ravaged for my sake. . . . They want my abdication. Very well! I will abdicate. . . . Our enemies refuse to hear of the Regency because they are afraid I might return. They foresee that France will call me back, and they are afraid it will be impossible to prevent me from taking the helm in hand again. They understand neither Europe nor their own interests. The Tsar of Russia's only impulse is for vengeance; England and Talleyrand are egging him on to it. Like a fool, he turns revolutionary—and he makes revolutions inevitable. Little does he know how hard it was for me to stop our own. Alexander is like Metternich; his vengefulness blinds him: they cannot see that I am vital to them, that in France's reduced

[1] On April 5, Napoleon had given instructions for a general troop-movement in the direction of Pithiviers and Malesherbes. Cf. *Correspondance de Napoléon*, 21556. The Guard had already been recalled to Fontainebleau. Berthier drew up all the orders for effecting the movement; they are to be found in his *Registre d'ordres* on file in the *Archives historiques de la Guerre*, and are dated April 5, 11 p.m. Consequently, they antedate the arrival of Caulaincourt and the marshals, and, since they are crossed out in red ink, they must have been countermanded after the plenipotentiaries' audience with Napoleon. Attention is drawn to this point because it is stated in the *Correspondance* that those orders were not executed because of the desertion of the Sixth Corps—an incomprehensible error, in view of the fact that that desertion was the reason why the orders were issued. It was Napoleon's decision to abdicate that made them superfluous.

position I am no danger to them now, and that I understand the peoples of Europe better than they do."

All during this conversation the Emperor was strenuously occupied in ascertaining the temper of the troops; word was coming in constantly, and from time to time there would be a report from Paris as well. He discussed everything that was relevant to his own position, to France's, to the army's, with a sang-froid, prescience, impartiality—yes, and in a spirit of self-abnegation—which I found well-nigh incredible. I never saw him more worthy of the throne than when he was bracing himself to descend from it. The first report on the outcome at Paris had been a shock to him; but then, casting about him like an eagle, he had surveyed his whole position as if on the battlefield—what he could keep in reserve, what points he could hold, where he must give way. He had made his decision in a flash: he had offered up, as a sacrifice to France and to necessity, that throne which victory had given him, and which was lost to him through a concatenation of circumstances, errors, reverses—yes, and grandeurs too—that will fill the most glorious pages of our history. His decision was made; he had resigned himself to the force of circumstances. But he loved to argue, and now as always—let his determination be what it would—he meant to contest every inch of the ground, even in the face of his own convictions. He told me to say nothing yet about his resolve; he wished to see various generals first, and to talk with Berthier and Marshal Ney, who were sure to know more than anyone else of what was afoot in the army, and also at Headquarters. He would see Oudinot, too; he understood that that marshal had received news from Paris, and he believed they had even sent an emissary to him. His Majesty asked me how Ney had behaved himself in the Tsar's presence. He added that he was sure of Macdonald's absolute discretion; that he was a man who belonged to the opposition, so to speak, but who was a man of honour before all else, and would not betray him after accepting credentials at his hands.

"My mind is made up," the Emperor told me by way of dismissal. "Go get a few moments' rest, for I shall call you

back in a little while. The marshals think, no doubt, that I am far from willing to abdicate, but sheer lunacy alone could make me hold fast to a crown which so many persons are in such haste to see me surrender, despite the very fact that it is as much to their advantage as to mine to have me keep that crown or pass it on to my son. Ney was talking sense, the day before yesterday, when he told me that my dynasty was their best protection—that his children could have no other. He thought so then, but to-day Marmont has driven them all out of their wits. Shame would doubtless prevent their following his example—but their dread of coming after him to the spoils is stronger still. Almost without exception, Caulaincourt, everyone has lost his head; the men are unequal to the circumstances; everything lies beyond man's power to predict. . . . Go rest yourself."

I wished to talk to him about his proposed establishment, to revert to my private conversation with the Tsar, to engage His Majesty's opinion upon what would suit him. He replied angrily:

"I shall want for nothing. Uphold the interests of France. Take thought for my wife and son, and forget the rest of it. . . . A soldier needs only a little room to die in."

Upon leaving the Emperor, I found Marshal Ney chatting in one of the salons with sundry generals who had come along to the Palace with him and were hanging on his words. He went into the Imperial quarters (I had been told to send for him), but he was detained there for only a half-hour, so it was said. His Majesty was weary, and had thereupon tried to get some sleep.

It was nearly 6 a.m. when the Emperor summoned me again. He talked over his conversation with Ney, who had told him that the army and all of the officers, including those at Headquarters, were restive and worn out;[1] that they wished

[1] Cf. General Pelet's memorandum in the *Archives historiques de la guerre*, and Macdonald, *Souvenirs*, 287, for data as to conferences amongst the generals during the night of April 5–6, and the morning after.

him to abdicate for the sake of peace; that it was impossible to answer for what either the officers or the men might do; that desertion had already set in; that the proximity of Paris was playing havoc with the army; and that if one were to move farther off, he would not care to say that many persons would follow on, even from amongst the Guard. The Emperor added that Marshal Oudinot and certain generals had told him virtually the same thing. What, he asked me, did I think of these rumours? What had I chanced to see or hear? My reply was that I had come to Fontainebleau in ignorance of how matters stood at Headquarters; that I was strongly inclined to believe that, as the marshal had told him, the weakening of the army consequent upon the Sixth Corps' departure would necessarily affect its morale; and that in my opinion, as I had made clear to him, he would have to take his stand. Demoralization had reached such a point, I told him, that he must hurry his decision; he ought to leave Fontainebleau and rally his other armies, unless he wished to find himself reduced to abdication and to the waging of guerilla warfare—a course repellent to him and every patriot alike.

His Majesty talked with me about what wording to use in his abdication. For the moment, seemingly, he wished to make it merely conditional by phrasing it in such a way as to avoid the main issue; as if any such wording would not be apparent to every eye; as if that were a feasible device in our position, dominated as we were by every force in Europe and mastered by treachery and desertion in our own ranks. Contrary to his wont, he expressed himself with so little clarity that his vagueness appeared to me intentional. But this matter of the abdication had been so extensively argued and defended, and notably by me at Paris, that once more I told him he must take his stand: let him give battle immediately, fall back along the Loire to-morrow, or else abdicate without reservations, since no reservations would be allowed. I remarked to him that, unless he made up his mind, there would be a waste of precious time. We were splitting hairs, I told him, over words which could carry no weight unless he had armies to defend his rights—and when one had armies, one

laughed mere verbiage aside. This, said I, was probably the very last moment when he would have any united forces at his disposal; if he did not employ them, he must either quit Fontainebleau as quickly as possible or abdicate, for no one would be deceived by fine points of verbiage in his abdication. Far better for him to refuse disdainfully than to give the appearance of reserving a loophole which no words would open for him to return through; to act in this wise would mean the closing to him of all access to any personal settlement. His present procedure, I added, would compromise his interests, and all to no purpose: France already had been surrendered without stipulations or a single safeguard, and he personally would be treated likewise if time were allowed for some fresh turn of events in the army, some armed revolt on the part of generals or officers whose mood was at once unsettled and aroused by the hope of peace, which he alone was represented as standing in the way of.

"Your observations are harsh, Caulaincourt."

"Say rather, Sire, that they are true. I feel privileged to make them to you because they concern your personal interest. Is it Your Majesty's pleasure to fall back upon the Loire? I am ready to follow you. Or do you wish to abdicate? Then make up your mind, I beg you, so that I may save you while there is time—while the Allied Sovereigns still feel themselves compelled to grant you a proper settlement, thanks to the army's attitude thus far, and to their belief in its devotion to you personally. My whole thought, Sire, is to assure you a living that will still give you sovereign independence."

"Come, come! don't take offence, Monsieur le Grand Ecuyer," he answered kindly; "I give you full credit for your feelings in my regard. Perhaps you are right—but the question is important enough to be worth discussing. Anyhow, what does the throne matter to me, now that I can do nothing more for France? The throne is merely a little bit of wood. I care nothing for it." And he went on to say that the prevailing unrest had settled his resolve, as I ought to have seen from our conversation during the night, although afterwards he had wished to canvass opinion as a whole,

because, in an affair of this importance, one ought not to move in the dark or in too much haste. As to himself personally, his resolve had long been fixed; but France was involved here, and her interests which, like his own, would be sacrificed unless he could stipulate for them; his abdication might have a bearing upon his son's destiny, and he would like to leave the King of Rome some means of regaining his rights.

"We have his rights at heart, Sire," I replied; "they are written on all our swords. If there had been any way of saving him your throne, I would not be here demanding this abdication. Nobody is going to be deceived by this projected draft; they will insist that you revise it. One draft is as good as another if the King of Rome has an army. But if he has none, what profit will he derive from equivocations that may ruin you and turn you over to your enemies bound hand and foot? Let us not add to our impending misfortunes."

I then talked with the Emperor about what was being spoken of as an establishment outside France. I told him all that had been said about it: the manifest desire to make it a remote one; my insistence that it be near by and in a good climate, for his health's sake; my preference for the Island of Elba because of its fortifications. Speaking of my dread of strong opposition from Austria on account of Elba's nearness to Italy, I mentioned the advantageousness of arranging this question with the Tsar of Russia before Metternich's arrival. Finally, I told him of the species of a commitment which I had extracted from the Tsar at the time of my first journey to Paris, and which would assure His Majesty of this establishment, at least. In so doing, I pointed out to him that were it not for that promise, one would perhaps be obliged to rest content to-day with whatever the foe cared to grant, even though it were at the world's end.

"Why have you not asked for Corsica, or Sardinia, or Corfu?"

"Corsica," I replied, "is a department of France; and I thought that to indemnify you by despoiling France would be

to act the part of your enemies and hers—an unbecoming rôle for Your Majesty."

"I approve of you absolutely," he replied with animation. "Poor France will be plucked bare enough when the time for the peace treaty comes; but Sardinia, Corfu?"

"As for Sardinia, it is out of the question. Corfu seems too near Greece, I believe, or else too important. That proposal was objected to. At the moment when this conversation occurred, the topic was wholly unexpected. I could not seem to pay much heed to it without betraying that I thought you already reduced to that dire extremity—which would have been poor policy. Later on I was able to go deeper into the subject, but still cautiously, both for the same reason as before and because I was ignorant of Your Majesty's intentions. Actually, there is nothing to prevent me from speaking of Corfu or any other place. I am sure they would give Your Majesty any other island of Sardinia's importance, just so it were farther from Italy and the Continent at large. Unquestionably, though, such places would not provide you with the same climate, nor with fortifications to secure you the same independence, as the Island of Elba."

I went on to say that it was my impression that they would add to this settlement a fitting annual income and a separate landed establishment for the King of Rome and the Empress, but that he would have to make haste if he wished to assure the fact; that we were living at the mercy of circumstances, all of them hostile; and so we must expect that the pledges we had received would be diminished rather than extended in proportion to the daily dwindling of the forces and authority now thought to be his.

The Emperor told me that what was being offered him would in nowise do; he wished an establishment in Italy. He did not care to cross the sea, for he wanted no dealings with the British, his bitterest enemies. I replied that, in my opinion, those were the very enemies who would afford him the soundest and most reassuring guaranty, once their government had committed itself. "That is possible," said he, after a moment's thought; and then he continued:

"I insist upon an establishment in Italy. Even admitting that I am to spend part of the year at Elba or some other spot, I may wish to spend the balance on the Continent with the Empress, who will feel slight inclination to cross the water, no doubt. I demand Tuscany—though that is by no means sufficient. In brief, you ought to adjust the compensations more nearly to the scale of the great sacrifices which I am making. Since Russia is conducting the negotiations, it means nothing to her—or to Prussia, or even to England—whether Austria gets a little less of Italy; Austria can indemnify herself in Piedmont, or somewhere. Since our enemies are taking everything, they can find no excuse for not providing the Empress with a proper settlement, independent of mine. You don't have to be content like a simpleton with whatever they offer you; the right way is to ask for what they ought to give me if they want me to abdicate. Much or little makes no difference to me personally. If I abdicate, I can live on two thousand francs a year. When all the riches of the world were at my disposal, I never invested a five-franc piece for my own account; the whole of it was in plain sight at the Exchequer. You know perfectly well, then, that I am not guided by self-interest. But in this instance the rights of the Empress and my son must be duly stipulated. Again I tell you that Their Sovereign Majesties, and the Russian in particular, have no direct interest which forbids my having a seemly establishment: a fact which must be turned to advantage."

The Allies, he added, would not prolong the war over this issue—wherefore I could adopt a bolder tone if the marshals upheld me. And he went on to speak of the Legion of Honour, of pensions, rank, military honours, and of the Poles, who had been so faithful to him; and he urged me to stand up for all these interests in preference to his own and those of his family. This, he told me, was to him a sacred obligation which he must discharge before all else. By designating a provisional government, they had deprived him of the whip-hand for stipulating to France's advantage. This he regretted because, since there had been no stipulation of peace terms as

yet, France was being turned over to the foreigners upon no security. She was being thrown upon the mercy of their feigned generosity, and the outcome would show what that consisted of—a fact which reconciled him, moreover, for having to give her up. It would be seen what France would get by way of compensation for Finland and Poland, for Austria's seizure of Italy, for England's tenure of India and her retention of our best colonies. This, he continued, was disgraceful of Talleyrand, with his knowledge of affairs. Napoleon, so it was alleged, was being sacrificed for France's advantage, in order to secure her a splendid peace—whereas actually, since she would have a disadvantageous one, it was France who was being sacrificed to the Bourbons. This was all a wretched intrigue, the work of a conspiracy. What ought to be done before all else was to throw in on the side of these vital interests, for their discussion and settlement, the weight still carried by his name and his power as head of the army. So vital was it for the Allies to obtain his abdication, and to remove him, his family, and even the Emperor of Austria's grandson from the political scene, that for the sake of gaining that end they would have granted far more honourable terms than France was now compelled to beg of their generosity. Thus, he added, it would have been possible to keep Belgium for France, and perhaps even the Rhine departments—nor at that price would he have any further complaint to make over the sacrifice that was demanded of him. Gladly would he have sacrificed even life itself to procure an outcome for France, and to leave at least so much proof of the devotion which he had always felt for this fair land.

"There you have what Talleyrand ought to have done," he concluded. "To offer the Bourbons France *with* Belgium was the part of Statesmanship—whereas he merely called those princes back to save himself." The Emperor then took his projected abdication from his desk and read it to me.

I pointed out to him that it was inadequate, that it did not conform to the demand. He made a revision. I pointed out that it was still inadequate. He dictated the draft over again in different words. I remarked that it still did not say what

was demanded of him. With admirable patience, he made several irrelevant changes. He agreed with me that a clearer and more precise statement was needed: the difficulty, however, lay in saying what he must, yet meanwhile tacitly reserving what he would. Finally, finding that such divergent interests could not be reconciled, he told me that he would re-draft the declaration before reading it to the marshals, but that he would entrust it to me alone; and he required my word of honour that I would not deliver it until after the treaty had been signed and had received the requisite guaranties. He then spoke with great emotion of the Empress and his son. The future of the one, the predicament of the other moved him far more profoundly than his own.

"Not one spark of concern, not so much as a thought from her father through all this misery! The Austrians are hollow-hearted," he told me. "Something must be sacrificed to political necessity, no doubt; but is policy strong enough to suppress the expression of the sweetest sentiment—the most natural of all? What more compelling, more calamitous occasion would it take to make the Emperor of Austria tell his daughter that his feelings cannot change? That she can rely on his affection? . . . Metternich would of course be afraid of compromising himself in the eyes of his friends the British and the Russians. They could send an open letter, the merest word. You were right! The Tsar Alexander, who has the greatest grievance against me, will be the only one, notwithstanding, who observes the proper forms or even the rules of decent behaviour. His manners ought to please the Parisians; he is the emperor they should have had; the surface is deep enough for them. Fawn over the men, flirt with the women. That's the style for the French. With such manners as those, a man would ruin the country and keep in its good graces nonetheless."

He mentioned Bernadotte: "I strongly approve of your answer," he told me. "It would be a disgrace for any nation to accept a Frenchman who has turned himself into a foreigner and has come sword in hand to invade his country with the hordes of the North. We can only hope that Destiny has

nothing so shameful in store for France! That would be the height of infamy. Far better the Bourbons; they at least have a right which absolves them, after a fashion, of the harm they have done to their country. But a Frenchman who has his fellow-countrymen's courage and valour to thank for his claim to glory and the reputation that has stood him on the first step to the throne—a Frenchman who has forgotten that his native soil is this land of brave men whom he comes here to enslave—that man can have no hope of commanding this great nation. His mere name should be enough to make the blood boil in every French heart.

"One of Alexander's brothers would have been more suitable by far—a choice which would have calmed the country and insured it against reaction. But England would never consent: and the whip-hand is hers. Because of the preponderance it would give to Russia, the Powers can no more agree to that arrangement than they could to the Regency, which they were unwilling to accept because it would give Austria the preponderance."

The Emperor told me that he would see me again; he would receive the two other plenipotentiaries immediately, and he wished me to come in with them as soon as they arrived. He sat down at his desk and seemed disposed, so I thought, to put his mind on the drafting of his abdication.

At the hour appointed by the Emperor for our reception, I was chatting in an ante-room with Macdonald. Marshal Ney followed us thither, and straightway he started lecturing us on the state of morale, on how necessary it was that the Emperor should come to a decision and that an end should be put to the general unrest. He told us that during the night he had had a long conversation with the Emperor, and had spoken flatly to him about the army's mood, its restlessness, the state of affairs, and the necessity of abdicating unconditionally, now that the Allied Sovereigns had declared that they would have neither the Regency nor any member of his family and that he was the sole obstacle to the restoration of peace. Ney added that he had not kept back from him that peace was the goal of everyone's desires, or that Their Majesties'

declaration had produced a profound effect, or that he must come to a decision. The Emperor had seemed to him thoroughly resigned, and had discussed the matter with him for a long while, so he said. But not a word did he say that might lead one to believe that a decision had been arrived at, or convince one of the pressure he must have had to exert by way of convincing His Majesty and forcing him to make up his mind. Not a word did he say of his own *démarche*; of how, during the night, he had notified the Provisional Government of the Emperor's alleged resolution to abdicate —a resolution which Ney, like ourselves, apparently thought probable, though he did not tell us that it had been reached.[1] In the audience which the Emperor granted us directly afterwards, nothing, either on his part or the marshal's, betrayed that the latter had persuaded His Majesty to abdicate, or that the Emperor had definitely promised Ney so to do. For once again there was lengthy discussion of this matter, including the disadvantages of the course, the considerations that called for this sacrifice, and the procedure to be followed in making it. This audience was marked throughout, on the Prince of the Moskowa's part as on our own, by deference, respect, and courtesy in the extreme. Like us, Ney restricted himself to suggesting and advising. We were outspoken; the circumstances made frankness our duty; but we showed every due mark of consideration for our Sovereign and for his position at the time.

The Emperor would abdicate; he removed all doubt of that. He repeated what he had done me the honour to tell

[1] Upon arriving at Fontainebleau, Ney had written Talleyrand a letter dated April 5, 11,30 p.m., at which hour it is doubtful that he had seen Napoleon. The *Moniteur* of April 7 printed this letter, in which Ney announced that the Emperor, "convinced of the critical position to which he has brought France, and finding himself so situated that it is impossible for him to save her, apparently has submitted and consented to abdicate absolutely and without any restriction whatever." When Ney returned to Paris, he bragged to Dupont that he had forced Napoleon's abdication, and he let it be understood that he had been very firm with the Emperor. In Thiers' opinion (*Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire*, XVII, 748), the marshal was exaggerating.

me: that this abdication was contrary to France's best interest, despite the general assurance that it was her desire and the one means of securing her peace. After many added remarks about the sort of peace which the French were allowing Talleyrand to conclude, the Emperor went into his study and came back with his proposed abdication. This draft, though more precise than the one he had shown me, was worded still in such a way that it would not have been received.

He listened to all objections, discussed them, and consented to a series of changes. His surrender, he repeated, would secure France only a less advantageous peace than he had refused at Châtillon. He enjoined us to look after his army's welfare in particular, told us that the National Colours must be retained, and spoke of the Viceroy[1] and of the French spirit which that prince had never lost. He repeated all his prior injunctions to me about safeguarding the interests of the army, the state officials, the institutions, the Empress, and his son. Again he told us that he was prepared to sacrifice everything, even his life, for France's happiness; that the sole end of his endeavours, and perhaps of certain blunders too, had been her glory, her prosperity; and now that he had failed, betrayed by men and Fortune both, he still preferred his own misfortune to the shame of having agreed to terms unfavourable to France. By way of dismissal, he added that he would finish our instructions and sign his abdication, which he would deliver to me.

While we were making our respective arrangements for departure, the Emperor called me back. He then repeated substantially what he had said first to me and afterwards to the marshals.

Once more he spoke of the Empress and his son, and of the Viceroy and the Empress Josephine, whose interests he urged me to bear in mind.

"It is to you, Caulaincourt," he added, "that I entrust my Instrument of Abdication, to you personally—for through it I entrust you not only with my own interests but with those

[1] Prince Eugène de Beauharnais, Viceroy of Italy.

of my family and of all who are dear to me." He then stepped into his study, called me in after him, and handed me the document with these words: "I confide it to your honour and loyalty. I ask for your word of honour that you will not deliver it until after the signing of the treaty, and until after it has been guaranteed that the French government will fulfil all classes of that treaty."

The Emperor then reverted to the Bourbons: "Talleyrand is calling them back because he fears that the Regency might favour my return, but they will chase him out when they are established and no longer need him. The Regency, with me living, was a ticklish matter—an impossibility: they sensed that clearly enough. The Bourbons are peaceable gentry; they suit the foreigners, whose statecraft they will never interfere with. They will have their hands full with France, for the country will not settle down under them unless they leave off their perukes and lay aside all their former pretensions; but that is asking for the impossible. A twelvemonth from now they will be at their wits' end. The nation and the military will never excuse the Bourbons for not having put themselves at the head of the Vendeans. Everybody remembers about that silly sojourn in the Isle of Yeu while there were eighty thousand white cockades ready and waiting to receive the prince.[1] If the Bourbons are wise, they will change only the sheets on my bed; they will give employment to the men whom I have trained. Their followers are nothing but passions and grudges with clothes on. With men such as those, they can do nothing unless it is reactionary, and they will ruin themselves. Everybody reasons in France. Flighty and frivolous, yes; but nobody forgets anything here. This country needs to be governed with a firm hand. A strong will is needed, but that will must draw its force from public opinion—and to that end all minds must be enlisted, all factions held in unison, so as to give them all a stake in the success of the government which protects them."

[1] In September, 1795, the Count of Artois was convoyed to the Isle of Yeu by a British squadron; and there he stayed until November 17, without setting foot on the Continent.

Those words struck me as so remarkable that I jotted them down almost instantly, while the Emperor left me and went into his bedroom for a moment. I had likewise noted all his prior remarks as soon as I had left his apartment.

The Emperor asked me if I would go with him to Italy or Elba. I answered that he could rely on me until his affairs were settled; that I had not yet been able to take thought of what I should do thereafter. Certainly, I told him, I would prefer to remain in France; I had a mother to look after, and I also had to console those whom he had tormented so much on my account.

This reply made the Emperor smile. His predicament forgotten, he joked about my love affairs, my constancy, and, taking me by the ear, he said: "That is true. I have tormented you properly, but your affairs must be well advanced by now."[1] He inquired whether the annulment of Mme de Canisy's marriage had been officially pronounced yet. When was I to be married? And did I believe that he had really acted in anger when he exiled Mme de Canisy from Court? I answered that I had no doubt of it; that for a time he had even honoured me with enough marks of his disfavour to make it seem credible that her exile was a result of his ill-humour, verging on malice.

"Malice," said he, "is too strong. I was displeased with your views. You took delight in contradicting me. You were duped by your friend Alexander, and you let me see too much of your opposition to the Russian war—which was, however, the most expedient that I ever waged. . . . But to what do you attribute my malice?"

"To the fact that Your Majesty had no other means of punishing me for my pacific views, and for my unwillingness to remain in Russia."

[1] The reference here is to Caulaincourt's protracted love-affair with Adrienne de Canisy, whom he had wished to marry since 1805, when she was lady-in-waiting to Josephine. Until 1814, however, Napoleon had forbidden the match for reasons which he is about to admit, although he passes lightly over the main one —his desire to keep down the number of annulments at Court until the scandal of his own divorce had cooled.

"I made you sigh," he resumed; "that is nothing to cry over. Once you were married, you would have been all the happier for it—I would have made it up to you, for by then nobody would have had a word to say. Do you suppose the lovely Madame de Canisy would have forgiven me? She has a mind of her own. Talleyrand saw a great deal of her, and that displeased me. . . . What does she think of all this? Isn't she at her father's? If you and she come to see me at Elba, you will be most welcome."

Telling me to wait, the Emperor went to read over the fair copy of our instructions which had been brought for him to sign. He gave them to me upon his return,[1] and told me to sit down, as he wished to dictate a private memorandum for me.[2]

[1] "The Duke of Vicenza, the Prince of the Moskowa, and the Duke of Taranto are appointed my plenipotentiaries to arrange whatever is pertinent to my interests and to those of my family, the existence of a provisional government having released me from the obligation to stipulate that which concerns the general interests of the nation."

"Article One of the treaty shall state my renunciation, for myself and for my family, of the French Empire and of all other sovereign rights. Care must always be taken to restrict this to the bare statement that the Emperor Napoleon, having declared by an instrument in autograph of April 4 that he is 'ready to descend from the throne for the good of the nation,' abdicates by these presents and renounces his rights to the thrones of France and Italy." (*Archives de Caulaincourt*, file 13; excerpts from copy.)

[2] These personal instructions, taken down in Caulaincourt's hand at Napoleon's dictation, are to be found in the *Archives de Caulaincourt*, file 13. The text, unpublished except in connexion with these Memoirs, is as follows:

"*Special orders to the Duke of Vicenza, dictated by the Emperor Napoleon to supplement instructions as given to the three plenipotentiaries under date of April 6 and drawn in due form by the Duke of Bassano.*

"First and foremost amongst all these questions, everything depending on this, is: Does the Empress go with His Majesty?

"It is the Emperor's wish that she do so. The trip will be made in short stages, so as not to tire her. He is writing to tell her so, giving orders direct. If it turns out to be Parma, she is to go to

Continued on next page

He ordered me to get Tuscany for the Empress, and I urged him either to join her or have her come to Fontainebleau. In such circumstances as these, I remarked, he would find it a vast consolation to have his family with him. There would be a measure of prudence, too, in not remaining apart from them and from their portion of the Guard and of his Household.[1] But he thought Her Majesty was safer where she then was, and also nearer to the meeting-place which he would appoint if he were to leave Fontainebleau, as it appeared probable that he might, since that seemed in all respects a most undesirable abode. He regarded the presence of his brothers, who were with the Empress, as security against

the Isle of Elba or Parma by way of the Corniche, thus allowing the time necessary for her installation in that principality, and its consignment to her.

"Either Savona or Genoa would be a good place for her to break her journey.

"This will all take care of itself. If it suits Her Majesty, who is there to gainsay it?

"Possibly, very possibly, some hostile power, abusing the privileges of force, may drive the Empress, the Emperor's wife, into committing what every right-thinking man must disapprove of—especially now, when I need personal comfort and consolation. Scarcely the behaviour to be expected of the woman who has held my love these past three years; but one must be ready for anything.

"As soon as it is apparent what the verdict is, the Emperor will make his choice. His objection is to the Empress's going to Vienna and making a show of herself before the whole of Europe.

"This is also the reason why she should leave France at once.

"Caulaincourt is to act accordingly in respect of the Powers. As to the Empress, he is to listen and say nothing. The Emperor writes direct to her—orders to her Household and her Guard included.

"It would be well if an Austrian officer and a Russian were sent to attend the Empress, to serve for her protection in case of need, and for the carriages, and to prevent any outrages by Cossacks.

"Caulaincourt will thus inform the lady in attendance, and will send somebody to the Empress. She had better start at once.

"Probably the Tsar of Russia will assign somebody of distinction; all the more reason why the Austrians should, out of respect for their own kindred."

[1] Marie Louise had been at Blois since April 2. There she remained until the 9th, when she set out for Orléans.

whatever might happen in that quarter.[1] Besides, he thought her more favourably situated than she would be at Fontainebleau for an interview with her father—that interview which was of his own desiring, and which he had instructed her to ask for, obstinately believing that it would remove every barrier from the path of the Tuscan affair. "It cannot be," he told me, "that the Emperor will refuse Tuscany to his daughter and his grandson at such a moment, when he is doing them so much harm."

I set myself in vain against this opinion, which I was far from sharing. The remainder of the conversation proved to me that this reunion was what he desired before all else, and that he was nursing the hope that an interview with his father-in-law would clinch the whole matter and procure Tuscany for his son. He continually conjured up illusions as to the consequences of this separation and that interview. He was relying on the Empress's expressed willingness to join him, and he sacrificed his one remaining consolation to that hope; for it was his conviction that his wife's affection and his father-in-law's religious scruples would prevail in this instance over the Cabinet's political schemes. So strong was his reliance on that willingness of Her Majesty's, and on her feelings, that, although he made allowance in his instructions for the possibility that their reunion might run foul of hostile opinion, he applied himself incessantly to the bringing about of that interview, which was his idea in the first place. Time and again he told me, as he had required of me in writing, that I was not to attempt to influence the Empress's decision in any way, or to make the slightest move; he was writing to her, he said, and would give additional orders and instructions direct to the members of her suite and to her detachment of the Guard.

Reverting then to what I had said by way of persuading him to hasten their reunion and not leave that portion of his Household and his Guard detached from him, he argued that they were better off where they were than he was at Fontainebleau, where he was stopping only from moment to moment

[1] Joseph, Louis, and Jerome were at Blois.

in order to have the news from Paris more readily. He would have left before now if he had had any prospect of a following, but, with everyone so weary at heart, it was likely that desertion would set in if he undertook a movement, and there would then be a marked split in the ranks, the appearance of which had to be avoided until something definite had been agreed to and signed with Their Majesties. That, said he, was the consideration which prevented his moving farther away. In any event, he added, forty-eight hours would show what he could do if heads cooled down; and he hoped that we might have something settled by that time. Meanwhile, we must try to arrange an armistice, or at least a line of demarcation, so as to halt the invasion somewhere and protect our troops.

"That will facilitate my correspondence with the Empress," he told me, "whilst it is still exposed to capture by detachments. It will also protect her and the Exchequer, too, from any *contretemps* if she rejoins me. Have an Austrian general, and a Russian—yes, and a British one—despatched to the Empress for her security's sake, so that all may be doubly sure," he told me over and over again. "And see to it that they are instructed to place themselves under her orders, to follow her, protect her, and command respect for her person, Court, and belongings if she rejoins me. Notify the Empress when you have procured the assignment of those generals. Tell Schwarzenberg it is disgraceful that the Austrians show no more interest in their Emperor's daughter and kindred."

And so, following his demand in respect of the abdication, he repeated those orders to me yet again and dismissed me, saying that he relied on me. I made haste to finish certain pieces of business in order to join my colleagues, who were ready and waiting for me to start with them. The Duke of Taranto drove with me as before.

CHAPTER VIII

Third Mission to Paris

WE reached the Tsar's at midnight, and were immediately received.[1] After a few words of greeting, Alexander told Ney that he thanked him, in the name of the Allied Sovereigns, for the zeal he had shown in forcing the Emperor to abdicate. The Prince of Benevento had passed Ney's letter on to him, said he, at the very moment of its reception during the night. "Through this, you have rendered a fresh service to your native land—a service vital to your country," the Tsar told him, picking up from his desk a copy of a journal in which the letter was printed.[2] "It cannot be forgotten." Ney looked more embarrassed than flattered by the compliment, when he saw that the publication of his letter exposed his remarkable over-anxiety to our view. Macdonald and I were exchanging glances; we had no idea of what all this was about. With an eye, most likely, to repressing our astonishment, Ney stepped over to us and stammered a few words by way of excuse for what he called his good intentions: he had written last night to the President of the Provisional Government, informing him that he, Ney,

[1] On the night of April 6–7. Caulaincourt is at variance here with Macdonald, who says (*Souvenirs*, 288): "Having arrived late in Paris, we sent word to the Tsar, who put us off until eleven o'clock the next morning." This midnight audience is attested to, however, by the account given of it in Caulaincourt's report to Napoleon under date of the 7th, the original of which he later recovered for his *Archives*, where it is preserved in file 13. Pasquier clearly is at fault in saying (*Memoires*, II, 322) that Napoleon delivered the abdication to his envoys in the early morning of the 7th. Koch makes the same mistake (*Campagne de* 1814, II, 599).

[2] The *Moniteur* for April 7, in which Talleyrand had made haste to insert Ney's letter. See p. 226, note 1.

had persuaded the Emperor to abdicate. Now they had printed his letter.

We gave vent to our surprise, taking Ney to task both for the inaccuracy of his statement, which was groundless as far as we knew, and for having written the letter without informing us of the fact. The marshal was greatly disconcerted when we protested our ignorance to the Tsar as well.

This circumstance filled us with unhappy thoughts, for it was not calculated to lend weight to our negotiations; and doubtless the Tsar, and the Provisional Government as well, would not fail to draw from it deductions which could only add to the prior embarrassments of our unhappy Sovereign's position. Before speaking of business, Alexander asked whether or not we came bearing the abdication, and if it were unconditional. Unless it were absolute, we could not be listened to. I was compelled to show the declaration. The Tsar demanded a copy, which he wished to keep at hand, doubtless intending to confer with the Provisional Government over the wording of it. He paid courteous attention to our demands, which I had drawn up into articles beforehand. He raised few noteworthy objections, nor did he rule out any of the articles. We agreed to deliver them to him in the morning with a few slight changes, the fruit of his objections.

There would not be the least difficulty, declared the Tsar, over our demands concerning the cockade, the Tricolour, the Legion of Honour, titles to rank both civil and military, endowments, pensions, and so forth. As before, he concurred entirely with our view of those matters, saying, "I regard the preservation of your social institutions and your national colours as wholly advantageous to the government that is to be established." He promised that he would bear our every concern in mind; that as for the Emperor, he, Alexander, would do all that lay in his power; and he assured us that we ought to put our trust, for the army and for ourselves, in his desire to oblige us if he could.

Upon leaving the Tsar's apartment, we paused a moment

in one of the anterooms to confer over what we should do. My colleagues urged me to undertake the revision of the articles,[1] and we agreed to meet at Ney's at eleven o'clock the next day. We were at the foot of the stairs when I received a summons from the Tsar. Alexander reviewed every topic of our recent discussion, repeating all the assurances which he had just given me.

He was astounded at Marshal Ney's behaviour, about which he asked me numerous questions before going on to discuss the Emperor's predicament. Had the Emperor made up his mind? The state of affairs, he told me, and the prevailing mood required that His Majesty should cherish no illusions—a remark that was prompted wholly by regard for his welfare—now that particulars were coming in from every side, but especially from the army, to prove that peace and quiet were the universal desire. I spoke of the Empress's position, and of the propriety of detailing an officer to shield Her Majesty from guerilla snipers if she were to travel. Speaking once more of her desire and the Emperor's to be together, I told Alexander that this reunion would be a comfort to them both. "You know my aides-de-camp," he instantly replied; "choose the one you think might be most acceptable for this errand. He shall leave on the spot."

I thanked the Tsar, and answered that his fine discrimination would lead him to a better choice than mine. "Very well, then; I shall send Shuvalov.[3] I make myself answerable, also, for seeing to it that the other Powers send officers. Name a French officer to go through your lines with them, so that they may arrive the sooner." It was agreed that

[1] "The Duke of Vicenza was in reality the only one in a position to conduct them (the negotiations) to advantage." (Pasquier, *Mémoires*, II, 323.)

[2] More exactly, that same day, April 7.

[3] Count Paul Andreyevitch Shuvalov (1775–1823) was a lieutenant-general and aide-de-camp to the Tsar. He had been one of the plenipotentiaries at Pleiswitz. He joined Marie Louise at Blois at 2 p.m., April 8.

Shuvalov would leave in the morning, and that I was to send Baron Saint-Aignan with him. The baron was the only officer who had come with me to Paris. Moreover, he was a Household official.[1] I insisted that an Austrian officer go with them, too. Telling me to ask that of Prince Schwarzenberg, he obligingly promised to mention the matter to him personally. Alexander then discussed our desire that the Emperor should have an establishment in Italy. He would raise no objection, so he told me, to a handsome settlement upon the Empress and her son. However, since the Emperor could not dwell on the Continent, it was impossible to give him an Italian State. The past was too fresh in mind. Any such establishment would be too disadvantageous for everyone, including the Emperor, who ought to see it in that light. Even the Island of Elba was considered, quite properly, as not remote enough; and already there was a deal of well-grounded criticism in opposition to that domicile so close to France and Italy. But circumstances, the Tsar added, had brought him to give me a sort of pledge on that score; and he would stand by his word of honour because he was a slave to it, and because nothing in the world could make him fail his word to a prince who was no longer lucky—whose whole safety lay now in that word alone. In conclusion, there would have to be a full concourse of the Powers to settle all our affairs; probably the Austrian and British Ministers would arrive before long. The Tsar dismissed me by saying that he would see us during the day.

I used up the night [of April 6–7] in revising the articles of the treaty into proposals, which I took to our rendezvous at Ney's for my colleagues to read. They approved them; but despite the Tsar's favourable reception of them in bulk, we seriously doubted their complete acceptance item by item. Current events were not tending to sustain the slight remnant

[1] Nicholas Rousseau, Baron Saint-Aignan, was Caulaincourt's brother-in-law and gentleman-in-waiting to Napoleon. He accompanied Marie Louise to Vienna, refused allegiance to the Bourbons upon returning to France, and was consequently deprived of his rank.

of our credit. Whatever we heard was dispiriting: the news from the Midi, the declarations of adherence pouring in from generals, officers, and officials everywhere, and their opinions leaking out through their relations who had remained in Paris.

Alexander received us in the afternoon. He had our reading of the proposals without raising objections, and he took the dossier to study it, so he said. (His purpose was to turn it over to the Provisional Government for consultation.) His Majesty concurred with the same points as on the night preceding, and added that he would write in person to the King if the slightest difficulty should chance to arise over the retention of the national cockade. He had no doubt, however, but that the Count of Artois, who was coming to Paris in the uniform of the National Guard which combined the three colours, would likewise wear the national cockade under which our armies had distinguished themselves.[1] (We stressed this point, saying that here, in our opinion, was something to reassure all factions; some common meeting-ground for them all.) Insisting upon a speedy conclusion, we stressed the fitness of putting a prompt end to the uncertainties of an Emperor who was sacrificing his rights for the sake of France's tranquillity. We emphasized the need of an armistice—of establishing the armies within bounds for the reassurance of our troops, and in order to end the harrying of the countryside. The Tsar replied that we would have to discuss that point with the Generalissimo.

As for the Emperor's concerns, we were assured that the

[1] At that moment the Count of Artois, acting on Talleyrand's advice, was having a National Guardsman's uniform made for himself at Nancy (Vitrolles, *Mémoires*, I, 340, 361). In Talleyrand's note, which Vitrolles delivered, it was proposed to the prince that he make his entry into Paris "wearing the uniform of the National Guard, and with a white cockade." But on the 6th Talleyrand wrote Vitrolles (*Mémoires*, I, 367), apropos the tricolour cockade: "Everybody joins in desiring that the Count of Artois should wear it; the army sets great store by this, apparently; and the Tsar feels that this would be a point of reconciliation which it would be the part of prudence to concede."

Allies were no less eager than ourselves to see them settled. However, the Austrian and British Ministers, although expected for several days past, had not yet arrived. There was Prince Schwarzenberg, who had represented Austria at the dethroning of his master's daughter; there was Lord Stewart, British plenipotentiary to the Allied Sovereigns and their armies. Together, they had seemed competent to deal with the prior proposals, but now, when the time had come to sign and seal their outstanding commitments, they were powerless. We plainly foresaw that we were no nearer the end of our labours than we were to the limit of the sacrifices which it was the intention to exact from us—albeit the Tsar went on talking to the marshals, as he had to me last night, about the personal plight of the Emperor and Her Majesty, in a tone which conclusively proved to us that he realized that common decency required that statecraft bring these matters to a prompt conclusion.

We seized this opportunity for speaking to the Tsar about the Viceroy's interests. He hastened to reply that that prince's future had been settled and guaranteed in a splendid and fitting manner by arrangements already made with the King of Bavaria[1]—though of course he would second us with his whole weight, should there be occasion for him to do so. I insisted that we be informed of the alleged settlement that had been made upon the Viceroy. Affairs of this importance, I remarked, could not be arranged by word-of-mouth declaration, promise or no promise.

The King of Prussia, whose presence the Tsar had announced to us last night, now arrived to take part in the conference. He saw no need, said he, for a résumé of all that had been read; he would take the Tsar's word for it; and besides, he preferred to study the dossier at home. "I did everything," he told us, "in order to remain at peace with the Emperor Napoleon. It was he who failed to keep one pledge after another—he who pushed things to such a point that war became inevitable. So it is he who has forced me to act as I

[1] Prince Eugène de Beauharnais, Viceroy of Italy, had married Princess Augusta, daughter of Maximilian Joseph of Bavaria.

have done. The honour of my crown impelled me in the first war; the interest of my people and of Europe guides me in this one."

These opening remarks gave place to recriminations over the past. Gone was the level and friendly tone which the Tsar had set for the discussion of our affairs. The King of Prussia, forgetful that only the Emperor's decree had been wanting for his dethronement, spoke bitterly of the harm His Majesty had done him and immoderately of what it was proper to do now. He added, however, that he did not wish to take advantage of the Emperor's ill-fortune.

The Tsar, perceiving how badly our feelings were hurt by this discourse, and how inappropriate it was to the circumstances, tried vainly, for a few moments, to divert it. The King had offended us gratuitously. Nothing short of the Emperor's position and the dread of civil war could have prevented me from taking up, on my own responsibility, the challenge so churlishly thrown at us; from breaking off a discussion and calling a halt to conferences which any such access of temper and unbridled hatred was bound to bring to a bad end. Our position was growing more precarious every minute. At Paris we were regarded as factious agents. We were speaking in the name of a government that was known to be non-existent but for our devotion, and in the name of an army chafing for release from its oath. What could our credit be worth? The Guard alone remained as a major unit of field officers and men, although a few already had deserted its colours. And even at Fontainebleau—in the very Palace, as it had been my unhappy lot to witness—the Emperor was being spoken of in the most revolting terms. One general even said that if His Majesty would not agree to abdicate, he must be put out of the way. He went so far as to propose the Emperor's assassination, and to suggest himself for one of the actors in that scene, his remark being that here was the only way to preserve our national independence; that Their Majesties would never consent to a Regency whilst the Emperor drew the breath of life. The abhorrence with

which this suggestion was received did not prevent him from repeating it.

That should be enough to show how things stood then, and what the prevailing state of mind was. True, there had been some success in reviving the morale of the rank and file since the time of our departure for Paris. The private soldier, being carefree of ambition, was still undivided in his loyalty. He saw the Emperor simply as his benefactor, the living symbol of his glorious past, his hope of glory and happiness to come. The news from Fontainebleau had it that there was agitation among the men of the Guard; they were proclaiming their unwillingness to hear of any settlement in the Emperor's behalf. They wanted to fight. Certain of the army corps were in a like temper, so ran the word; they were being roused by various persons whose names were given; and in those circles it was being said that we were traitors—that we had forced the Emperor to abdicate.[1]

The fact was that the Emperor, seeing fit now to rally his forces in the South,[2] and to give orders accordingly to Prince Eugène—for what he wished to find out was whether he had a following, and just how far he could rely on the Guard, the Line, and the generals—had allowed the fervour of certain brave fellows to flare up again as a means of testing opinion. Was he at the bottom of this agitation? I do not know. Possibly he was, for a number of trustworthy persons told me so at the time. His action struck me as probable; and perhaps, under the circumstances, it was the better course to follow. If so, however, he ought to have resolved upon it sooner.

[1] During the night of April 6–7, some troops of the Guard had left barracks at Fontainebleau and dispersed through the town, cheering for the Emperor and calling for a march on Paris

[2] In principle, at least, the Emperor still had at his disposal (apart from the forces concentrated at Fontainebleau) the Army of Italy, which did not lay down arms until April 6; the force returning from Spain under Suchet; and the Army of Lyon, whose commander, Augereau, albeit ill-disposed towards Napoleon, did not sign an armistice until April 12. Lastly, Soult was keeping up opposition to the British in the Toulouse sector.

He would have done better to act on impulse, quit Fontainebleau, accept all the risks and perils of partisan warfare and of attempts against his life; for the Coalition, with the Restoration to urge it on, would have had no more scruples in the future than it had at that very moment, when it was slipping a dagger into the hand of Maubreuil and other such hired assassins.[1]

The Emperor's personal position could not be worse than it was; and there was doubtless some glory to be had from fighting to the death in defence of a crown that had been won by such splendid feats of arms. His Majesty still had resources enough to carry on irregular warfare, and, as he quite reasonably said, the enemy's presence in France and the course of the war itself would have bettered his situation from day to day. France might have been ravaged; she might have suffered the effects of a prolonged occupation, of a war that would have embroiled many of her best citizens. But she might also have been tempered anew by that harsh schooling. Her energies restored, she might not perhaps have witnessed in her capital the signing away of half her territory, of a navy equal to Britain's, and of arsenals better stocked than the rest of Europe's put together.[2]

None of these considerations was overlooked by the Emperor. Unquestionably, then, it was his wish to spare France the miseries of civil war. Mere personal advantage would have led him to prefer that war, which promised many a chance of success to a genius of his stamp, and which, in return for such risks of death as he had always taken lightly, afforded no prospect more disagreeable than he was being compelled to face.

Since the passage of those events, his action has been variously explained. What will history find? That tribunal,

[1] Concerning the proposed assassination of the Emperor and Maubreuil's plots, cf. Frédéric Masson, *L'Affaire Maubreuil* (Paris, 1907), 96.

[2] Five thousand pieces of artillery were included among the items signed over to the Allies by Louis XVIII in the Treaty of Paris, May 30, 1814.

before which all of us will come, pronounces judgement without hearing us—without knowledge of the thousands of separate decisions, the innumerable small incidents which, in such perilous circumstances, determine the minds of men and yet escape the most careful observation. Fleeting with the moment that gave them substance, those considerations go unappraised because, more often than not, they were known only to the man whose moment of decision that was, or to the few initiates who held their tongues because it was expedient for them to assume no responsibility for the course of events. When those events are things of the past, then the same persons who found one's every act inevitable become the most pitiless censors. Everything that was done they find fault with at their ease, as if, in the instant of danger or difficulty, one could have known whatever has been learned since then by those who now set themselves up in judgement upon questions beyond the scope of man's foreknowledge. Therefore, in speaking of so important an epoch, it is my duty not to confine myself to the mere task of a narrator. I would urge those who are disposed to censure the Emperor—those who claim that he ought to have died sword in hand, preferring anything rather than abdication—to think back over that epoch.

They argue as though the Emperor might have controlled the army; as though the giving of battle actually depended upon him; as though the chiefs of the army would have been willing to fight. Such critics are viewing men and circumstances on April 8 and 10 as if it were still April 3. In that interval, however, all had changed. The defection of the Sixth Corps, the Acts passed by the Senate and by the Parisian authorities, the declarations of adherence that were sent into Paris by sundry generals, the Emperor's fostering of the belief that he had abdicated—all this had weakened his ascendancy and destroyed his power. In his Palace at Fontainebleau he was still encompassed with everyone's care and respect. Let him pitch his headquarters twenty miles beyond . . . and what would he have had left? The great majority were held at Fontainebleau by some vestige of human feeling, by

the shamefulness of being the first to leave the man to whom they owed so much. Let the Emperor depart, however, and there would be no scruples about not following him. A few were standing by him out of devotion. Pity (I ask pardon; I use the word in all sorrow) was constraining a few more. The rest were only waiting for an opportunity, which his departure would have furnished. With things in that state, was the Emperor free to choose his path? Could he, perchance, have retraced his steps after counting the thin ranks of his friends? Under like conditions, could he rely on the leaders and troops in the Midi? Examples are catching: the hero of Castiglione's proclamation has proved all too well that in a state of revolution the most glorious of remembrances do not restrain a brave man from acts of treachery or cowardice.[1]

A state of rest had become the universal need; everyone thirsted for it: citizen, private, general, all alike wanted *peace*. As I wrote to the Emperor from Paris on April 5, that word had acted like a spell; it had weaned away the most devoted. By withdrawing into the central departments, the Emperor might have carried the war there; and meanwhile peace would have been proclaimed, and no conscription, in the departments we were evacuating. At the moment the prevailing state of weariness of men's minds rendered the struggle impracticable. It was not a matter of fighting against two or three hundred thousand men; rather, it was the whole of Europe under arms against a single man—eight hundred thousand bayonets which already covered a third of Old France.

Not one of the reflexions that I am presenting to the reader had been overlooked by the Emperor. We had squeezed the matter dry in our long and painful conferences; and to those who blame him for yielding to the storm, I can certify that that storm was a gale into which he had headed longer

[1] At news of the Emperor's abdication, Marshal Augereau, Duke of Castiglione, issued a proclamation to his troops, in which he censured Napoleon for "not having known how to die like a soldier." Cf. Koch, *Campagne de* 1814, II, 639.

than he ought. Does anybody wish to judge this great question on the basis of precedents? Then let him cite some which might have offered the Emperor any real grounds for assurance.

Before deciding what such a man should have done, one must show that all those who owed him their support did and were disposed to do their whole duty. But all our recollections prove the contrary. The course of events; the general discouragement; and especially the fear, rife at that time, that any success whatever might lead him on to fresh enterprises: all this goes to show that those who make believe that he might perhaps have acted differently are at fault in more respects than one.

Was it the Emperor's duty to refuse all compromises; to sacrifice to purely personal interests the welfare of his son and his wife, for whom he might justifiably expect a proper settlement?

Of course (his position being what it was) these considerations, quite proper to a father and a husband, are secondary here. In the present connexion, accordingly, I mention them for what they may be worth. Taken alone, they would not perhaps have been sufficient to decide his course, but, with so many another thrown into the balance, they must be given their due weight. It may be alleged, no doubt, that if the Emperor had left Fontainebleau he would have lost no more men than were deserting him while he remained there; that he would then have lost none but the untrustworthy. I draw no such inferences, although to admit them does not prove that the remnant of his resources would have sufficed to carry on the war effectually and in the style consonant with his character and his high talents: for His Majesty was not the man to wish to fight as a guerilla. Some favourable circumstance could doubtless have arisen from the events precipitated by irregular warfare. France, dejected and deceived, would perhaps have come awake; the invaders' presence might possibly have revived her powers. . . . Far be it from me to deny those grounds of hope. I confine myself to the assertion that the Emperor, having weighed all in the balance, decided

that he must bow before the storm; that it was his duty to sacrifice himself for France, in return for all her recent sacrifices on his behalf. His hesitation and his desire to revoke his decision show clearly enough that he was halted not by danger but by the conviction that nothing would come of new sacrifices on France's part.

I should add that that very imminence of danger was gratifying to him. Far from being insensible to the stimulus of Glory thus renewed, he took pleasure in exaggerating the terror still carried by his name at a moment when there was virtually none to uphold it but himself. If he surrendered—if, in those bitter moments, he made the greatest possible sacrifice to what he believed was France's best advantage—he did so because, like another Decius, he chose to sacrifice himself alone. Venturesome by nature, he could be prudent and submissive only by conviction: and his decision in a matter of this sort is as weighty as the opinion of writers who presume to judge him.

What he did then was written clear in what he told me and put in writing for me on January 4,[1] when he despatched me to Allied headquarters at Freiburg, and in what he repeated to me under date of [2] by La Besnardière's hand.[3]

The whole thing is there; and there is nothing that can blot this glorious page of his life's history.

The Emperor abdicated because it was his own persuasion that to prolong the struggle would devastate France without preserving her, and without averting his destiny. He repented of this decision more than once, of course, and wished to revoke or modify it; for in misfortune we turn instinctively to the faintest glimmering of hope until the evil day arrives. Despite himself, he clutched at the hope which his reason and common sense had rejected a minute or two ago—then through a number of twists and turns provoked by his state

[1] Cf. *Correspondance de Napoléon*, 21062 and 21063, letter to Caulaincourt and instructions, Paris, January 4, 1814.

[2] Left blank in the manuscript.

[3] La Besnardière, entrusted with the portfolio during Caulaincourt's mission, had rejoined his chief at Châtillon on April 5, 1814.

of mind, by the person speaking with him, by the news he received. What I can swear to is that in his opinion the knock-out blow came with Marmont's defection, and the *coup de grâce* with news of the first declarations of adherence that went in from Fontainebleau; and that the thought of civil war—the idea of laying France open to its ravages—was revolting to him always, and always left him prepared for submission.

Of course, once his choice had been made, it might have been more becoming if he had not tried to go back on it, and had thus proved that his decision was the result of a fine and unselfish resolve. Let us not forget, though, that kings are human; and the monarch who preferred to die rather than ratify his abdication, showed, under those circumstances, self-abnegation enough so that one has no right to pick an occasional flaw in that great drama of statecraft.

While these reports about the Guard's hostile intentions and the Emperor's renewed vacillation came in from one quarter, other sources informed us that the generals and field officers were growing more and more restive and discontented. The young recruits were deserting their standards. The cabals of the Provisional Government[1] and its swarming agents left the loyalty of many an officer open to question. We had every reason to fear that the army would break up before there had been time for an armistice which would safeguard at least a part of France from hostile incursion and leave our troops in peace.

The Prince of Neuchâtel was urging us, and me personally, to secure approval of an armistice. General Curial[2] and others

[1] Upon learning of Marmont's defection, Talleyrand had written the Duchess of Courland: "That is the result of our proclamations and papers." (*Talleyrand intime, d'après sa correspondance inédite avec la duchesse de Courlande* (Paris, Kolb, n.d.), April 4, 1812.

[2] Count Curial (1774–1829) had been general-in-command of the First Division of the Young Guard since March 14, 1814. This division belonged to the Duke of Treviso's corps which, by order dated 3 a.m., April 5, Napoleon had moved up to Essonnes to take over the outposts after Marmont's desertion. Cf. *Archives historiques de la guerre*: Berthier.

also gave us to understand that this was a matter of necessity; they were even afraid lest they be attacked, and they dared to say as much.

General Curial, who was in command at the vital point of Essonnes, had sent his chief-of-staff direct to the marshals for that purpose, or rather to learn what was happening in Paris; and he had done so without notifying General Headquarters. Everybody, he announced, was ready to quit the ranks; unrest had come to a head. In a word, all were turning their gaze towards the rising sun, and were seeking for a place in it; the warmth was gone out of the one at Fontainebleau; and every man jack of them was afraid of being late, and of finding himself in bad odour because he had stood aloof. This attitude grieved the Duke of Taranto, as it did me; and he spoke to General Meynadier[1] in that sense, making clear to him how untimely and dangerous such behaviour was, and how great the necessity for all to stand together for the common good and for the good name of each. I drew up a letter to General Curial. The marshals approved it, and added their signatures to mine. It was sharp, the intention being to make clear to him that his behaviour was unseemly, and that his proper mode of address was through his superiors. He was advised to notify the other corps in the same sense; and this produced the right effect. However, I should interpolate that that letter was not despatched until past midnight, an unforeseen circumstance having arisen (as I shall presently relate) which prevented our sending it off until we had returned from the Tsar's quarters, to which that prince had suddenly called us. But first we must return to what the plenipotentiaries did on that day [April 7].

Since morning, following the Tsar's instructions, we had been to Prince Schwarzenberg's to discuss the armistice and

[1] Meynadier (Henry-Louis-René) was not chief of Curial's headquarters-staff, as the text here might seem to indicate. He had, on the contrary, held that post under Marmont, and must have left Essonnes when the latter did, since Fabvier thereafter assumed his duties. Just why Meynadier's name should appear in the present connexion remains uncertain—unless possibly Caulaincourt mentions him by association with a prior effort to bolster morale.

to try to conclude it. Thus far, as you will notice, Prince Schwarzenberg had not intervened directly in our negotiations, nor had any Englishman taken part in them. At every point where a response or a decision seemed called for, the Tsar said that he must confer with his allies. The armistice, being considered a purely military problem, was referred to the Generalissimo. Only the King of Prussia had put in an appearance—his first—that morning.

During the conference, the Tsar spoke throughout in the name of his allies and himself, but it already was plain that nothing conclusive would be done without the concurrence of the Austrian and British Ministers. Those ministers were momentarily expected, so we had been told; but I had learned that they would not arrive for several days.[1] They were holding aloof under the Emperor of Austria's wings; Metternich to avoid the direct odium of dethroning the son-in-law and the daughter of his master; and Lord Castlereagh, representative of the Prince Regent at the Council of Sovereigns, to avoid, in respect of his Government, the actual responsibility for events and for the steps that were being taken. Both of them were glad enough to let the Tsar Alexander bear whatever opprobrium there might be—not to mention the strain, embarrassment, and risks of the intrigue that was being carried on, and the chances of war that might supervene, involving responsibility on their part.

We therefore resolved to rush the conclusion of the armistice, instead of leaving that question tied in, as proposed, with the others. So insistent were we, and so close did we stick to Schwarzenberg's heels, that all clauses of that military arrangement were agreed on and virtually drafted during the day. The working out of the line of demarcation was going on through the night. The two marshals had this business more particularly in hand, and were at Schwarzenberg's head-quarters. Meanwhile I was re-drafting the treaty, as indicated, to conform with altered circumstances and with additional comments by the Tsar Alexander, to which we had assented.

[1] Metternich and Castlereagh arrived in Paris on April 10.

These details made a conference imperative, and, since Nesselrode was unable to arrange one for us until a late hour, on account of the considerable time required for these revisions, we had agreed, in order to save as much time as possible, that we would meet beforehand and decide upon the treaty clauses and those of the armistice, the conclusion of which was so urgent. We had agreed, moreover, that the marshals would then go to the Generalissimo's, whilst I attended the diplomatic conference at the Russian Minister's. Consequently we had forgathered at the Prince of the Moskowa's to send General Meynadier on his way, review my work, and look over the armistice, which had kept the marshals busy all day with Prince Schwarzenberg.[1] And then, at eleven o'clock p.m. (April 7), I received a note from Count Nesselrode, saying that the Tsar wished to see us immediately.[2] We obeyed in all haste. But what was our surprise when, on entering the Tsar's presence, we were told in a severe tone: "The Emperor Napoleon has left Fontainebleau by way of the Burgundy road." Agitation was going on amongst the Guard, he continued. This was trickery; this was playing fast and loose with the good faith in which he had received us. The kindest explanation he could think of in our behalf was that we were ignorant of what went on, that we ourselves were dupes. At least, that was the light in which he wished he could view this event for our reputations' sake.

[1] Concerning this piece of negotiation and the double-dealing with which the marshals had to contend, see Macdonald, *Souvenirs*, 291.

[2] The text of this letter, according to the original preserved in the Caulaincourt *Archives*, is as follows: "His Imperial Majesty the Tsar, having an important communication to make to you, begs Your Grace to be so kind as to call on him this evening at nine-thirty, and to request that the Duke of Elchingen and the Duke of Taranto do likewise. I have the honour, etc. Paris, April 7, 1814. Count Nesselrode."

When Caulaincourt came to write up his Memoirs, memory must have played him false at this point; for his account of the incident, as forwarded to the Emperor, is dated April 7 at 11 p.m. The interview must therefore have taken place at approximately the time set by Nesselrode.

Several messages had come for us during the day from the Prince of Neuchâtel, and one from General Curial; and in the evening I had received a private one from the Emperor. It was patent to me, therefore, that this news was false. I took it to be a scheme for cheating us of our armistice and for delaying the conclusion of our affairs, which in all probability were thought to be further advanced than was actually the case. Prompted by this idea, I was the first to speak up. I told the Tsar that the news they were giving him was wholly false; that the Emperor's intentions and conduct alike were being slandered; that this was an intrigue, as he might readily discover. I was so sure of it, said I, that I invited His Majesty to have me placed in custody until the facts had been verified. The Tsar replied that I was going a little too fast; he would like to impart all the particulars to us in order to convince me. From the name of the person who gave this warning—a member of the Emperor's Household, which fact should vouch for the accuracy of the news—I would see that in this affair I must be a victim after having been a dupe, if he were to take me at my word. Macdonald supported me in the assertion that we had had the very latest news from Fontainebleau during the evening, wherefore these tidings seemed false to him also.[1] Ney referred to the chief-of-staff of the corps stationed at Essonnes, who also had arrived during the afternoon, and we all remarked that the general officers would not have overlooked so important a fact; that they would certainly have forewarned us of it: finally, that the marshals and generals who were at Fontainebleau would not take upon themselves the responsibility for any such move as that, without giving us warning. In reply to the Tsar, I said that far from fearing to take the responsibility, I assumed the whole of it; that I had had the very latest news, and that the report of which he spoke could not possibly be more recent than mine; that it was my privilege to repeat to him that this was a plot. Both marshals said they were ready to consider themselves prisoners until such time as the matter could be cleared up. I repeated that I had not the slightest misgivings

[1] Cf. Macdonald's account of this scene (*Souvenirs*, 294).

about putting myself forward in this matter and assuming full responsibility for whatever might come of it, since I was the one who had had the latest word from Fontainebleau, as brought to me by an orderly who had left there at four o'clock and reached Paris at eight; and these particulars, I hoped, would convince His Majesty and induce him to suspend judgement.

The Tsar looked displeased in the extreme, but he was somewhat shaken by the assurance of our replies. However, he was far from convinced, so definite did he consider the particulars that he had received. He would have it that in this instance I must be what he called the dupe of my feelings and my own honesty; and he repeated that he was going to convince me by showing me the letter itself. We proposed that His Majesty send one of his officers to Fontainebleau first to find out the facts; we would send one of ours along to clear the way. That was agreed to. The Tsar appointed one of his aides, Count Ojarowski, who was ordered to start at once. But his resentment still was so strong that our assurance and this measure between them were not enough to prevent the Tsar from declaring that everything done or promised by him down to the present must be regarded as void. Towards the end of the audience, though, he added that he would stand by all his pledges to us if this report proved false. He was so incensed that he gave us to understand that only his personal esteem for us had induced him to allow us to make any explanation. Otherwise he would have let the Provisional Government assume responsibility and take us into custody, as it had asked to do. And he went on to say that this was a sorry acknowledgment of all his services to us, and no help to the cause in defence of which we spoke; that surely we must know that he had stood sponsor, as it were, to his allies on our behalf, had prevented their taking stringent measures, had guaranteed that they would carry on discussion over a matter which it lay in their power to brush aside, and which offered advantages to us alone. Moreover, since he had pledged himself for the honesty of our *démarches*, he could not say how hurt he was by the way things had turned out, and by their

repercussions upon Allied interests. Surely we must be aware that it was to his intervention alone that we owed the acceptance, as binding promises, of whatever he might have offered me as grounds of hope, at best, on the Emperor Napoleon's behalf—a solicitude for His Majesty which had left him, Alexander, somewhat embarrassed where his allies were concerned. He had already been blamed for paying more heed to his kindly personal impulses than to sound policy and his duties as sovereign; and now there would be ample justification for levelling such reproach at him.

Then, picking up the papers that were on his desk, the Tsar handed them to me, saying:

"Read. You are familiar with this handwriting, surely. See for yourselves, you and the marshals, whether or not this news can possibly be false."

There were three items: a letter from M. ——, general of division, in command of a cavalry corps at ——;[1] a report from the commandant of the Russian outposts; and another from Marshal Barclay de Tolly.[2] The general's letter stated that he had just learned that the Emperor, with his Guard, had left Fontainebleau by way of the Burgundy road, and that now, finding himself without directions, he begged the

[1] In his manuscript, Caulaincourt leaves blanks both for the general's name and that of his post, whereby his identity might be discovered. "He did not wish," says Thiers (XVII, 788), "to expose him to posterity's contempt, and refused to designate him by name in his Recollections." Macdonald, in his *Souvenirs*, p. 295, is less discreet, however. The report, he says, was sent in by Prince Repnin, commanding the Russian forces at La Ferté-Alais; and he gives "D——" as the initial of the culprit. With those clues, it would not have been difficult to identify the general in question. (Cf. *Archives historiques de la guerre*: Berthier, where appears the order for Defrance to take station at La Ferté-Alais on April 4.) However, all doubt is removed by Caulaincourt's report to Napoleon on April 7, 11 p.m., already mentioned, in which he says (*Archives de Caulaincourt*, file 13): ". . . Tsar Alexander sent for us in order to tell us that he had that moment received word General Defrance had just informed the outpost at La Ferté-Alais that Your Majesty had set out on the Burgundy road at three this morning."

[2] Barclay had taken over command of the Army of Silesia.

Russian general to advise the Tsar and the Provisional Government of this fact so that he might have orders, etc. The Russian general's report, which the Tsar was pleased to translate for us, filled in these details with what the French officer who brought the letter had said verbally, asserting that the general had just received this news, which he begged him to pass along in all haste. I confess that I all but dropped the paper (nor were the marshals any less astounded than I), though not because this singular letter convinced me of the Emperor's departure. Rather, I was at a loss to understand any such message, or assertion, any letter couched in such terms as those, coming from a French general to an enemy general. In a word, I could not comprehend how a general officer could do such a thing—an act which, as the Tsar put it in his usual tactful way, left no room for further doubt, since the letter was from the hand of a man who was in a position to know whereof he spoke.

We called the Tsar's attention to the fact that this news, which [1] had brought in from Fontainebleau, could not be so fresh as that which I had received; but our scouting of his misgivings went for naught. Doubtless, a lofty impulse prevented him from believing us: he could not bring himself to think that these officious reports were merely the result of vile ambition, of uneasiness and the desire to shine in the sight of the new government; he believed that I had been deceived by the message which I cited. For the time being, nothing could restore the Tsar's confidence; he would not be convinced until next day, when his aide-de-camp returned.

The Tsar detained me after my colleagues had left, and again he went over the same ground with me. I held to my stated opinion without convincing him the more, but never can I forget his kindness to me—the fineness of feeling which made him show me all the more proofs of friendship in that instance because he thought I had been tricked. Unhappily, I could feel nothing but sorrow that such a wealth of fine talents, noble sentiments, and fair intentions, joined to so marked a desire to do good, were yet allowing this prince to

[1] This name is left blank in the manuscript.

follow what in my belief was the wrong course, and to mistake the true interests of my country and of Europe. It grieved me to see him doing France so much harm when he could so easily assure her happiness. The men who deceived him, who roused his sense of grievance (justified though it was, perhaps, to a degree) against the Emperor Napoleon, and who then took advantage of that grievance to drive him to extremes disastrous for France—those men, I say, can reproach themselves with more than one high crime; for Alexander's desire to do good was dearer to his heart than any personal grudge. Ill-will had no place in his sentiments.

Upon leaving the Tsar, I went to Ney's house, where we had arranged to meet. We wrote a letter to the Prince of Neuchâtel, as we had agreed to do, and sent Ojarowski on his way.[1] While we were thus engaged, Prince Schwarzenberg sent to inform us that as far as he was concerned the whole of our former understanding now was void, after the news he had received of the Emperor's departure. The orderly was under instruction to demand the draft of the armistice terms which had been agreed on. We went in vain to the Austrian's quarters to make our explanation; he refused even to see us. We tried without avail to have somebody disabuse him; no one would listen to us. We would be obliged to give in and surrender the draft of the armistice, the conclusion of which was so pressing. Such store did we set by this that my colleagues commissioned me to return alone to

[1] "*April 7, midnight.*—At the moment of announcing the armistice, its proclamation is held up because a report comes from General Barclay de Tolly, whose outposts are at La Ferté-Alais, and who announces that General Defrance has warned the enemy outposts that the Emperor Napoleon departed at three o'clock in the morning in a little tilt-cart, taking the road for Burgundy. . . . Consequently, a Russian officer is being sent to Fontainebleau to make sure that the Emperor still is there. We therefore beg Your Excellency to give him that assurance quickly, and to start him back without delay; for these wretched suspicions are holding everything in abeyance and have put the Allies and the Provisional Government in a position to think that we came here in order to screen that departure." (*Archives de Caulaincourt*, file 13, draught.)

Schwarzenberg's, in hopes that he would not refuse me a brief hearing, and that, when he had heard all the particulars which had been furnished to the Tsar, I would win agreement to the signing of the armistice as soon as the reply had come from Fontainebleau. I was not able to see him: the door was all but slammed in my face. We would have to give the protocol of the armistice. The more embarrassing our predicament, the more vital that the army should know nothing of it. We made haste, therefore, to send General Curial's chief-of-staff on his way before anything might leak out. He was given the letter that had been composed before our summons to Alexander's. The Prince of the Moskowa remarked, very wisely, that the breaking off of the proposed armistice called for the addition of a clause to the letter by way of explanation for the delay which that arrangement might undergo—a delay, the causes of which we kept to ourselves, in order not to cause added discouragement.

Upon returning home, I saw the officer who had come from Fontainebleau,[1] and with whom I had only been able to chat for a moment, since he had not arrived until just as I was about to join my colleagues. He confirmed what I had not doubted in the least: that the Emperor was waiting impatiently at Fontainebleau for news of our negotiations; that there had been some slight disturbance amongst the Guard that evening, and possibly some preoccupation in the Palace over various schemes. At that moment, however, the Emperor was waiting impatiently for the officer's return—and for the paper which he had entrusted to me; he wished to make some changes in it; and he had privately instructed him to tell me to let him have it back. I was as much astonished by this demand as by the Emperor's manner of addressing it to me, after he had so particularly ordered me on no account to part with that instrument; and so I made the officer repeat the demand in full detail. I confess that I would have been suspicious of any but a man as deep in the Emperor's confidence as he was—especially when, in reply to my questions,

[1] The one (apparently Gourgaud) who had brought Caulaincourt a message from the Emperor at 8 p.m.

he said that he had no order in writing, nor any document to give me in exchange. When he once more avoided naming the instrument, I told him that he was not making himself clear enough so that I could be certain what the Emperor was asking me for; that if it were the instrument I assumed it to be, the Emperor, when he entrusted it to me on the sole condition that I fulfil its terms, knew very well that from then on I was powerless to return it. The officer then countered by saying that the Emperor demanded back his Instrument of Abdication. I refused, since, so I told him, I could under no circumstances return it in response to a verbal demand; nor would I turn it back to the Emperor as a means of breaking off the negotiations whose basis it was, and thus act without the consent of my colleagues—men whose probity and principles I understood, and whose confidence I could not abuse. I added that I had been obliged to show the original when I arrived, and to turn over a copy of it in order to procure a hearing; that my sense of honour admitted of no act of bad faith, towards I cared not whom; that it was quite possible to withdraw entirely, but that I would never be the agent in any shady trick; moreover, that I was in effect trustee of the abdication, my duty being merely to see that it was not delivered until such time as all promises made in respect of the Emperor had been fulfilled; that this was the sole limitation he had put upon me—and I would carry it out to the letter. I asked the officer whether he had another to give in place of it, since for the time being I could not mention the Emperor's request to my colleagues without prejudicing his best interests. He answered that the Emperor had impressed on him that neither he nor I should mention this matter. This request, and this air of secrecy; the word that had come to the Tsar; the Emperor's silence, in not giving me so much as the means of excusing myself for the surrender of the instrument he demanded back from me; the consequences that might follow upon my action—all these factors rushed pell-mell into my mind. Since it was my habit not to waste time in detours, I decided to write the Emperor; and I sent M. —— on his way again.

This episode proved to me that the Emperor had relapsed into indecision; that he was still pleased to hope for a reversal of the misfortunes that overwhelmed him. But in order to accomplish that, he should have made up his mind sooner. Everything that three days ago was fair and practicable, to-day was dubious. General Curial's message was still too fresh in my mind. Now that it was too late, they were egging the Emperor on: and as for him, if his mind were made up, then why this evasiveness with me? "Come! We must conquer or die!"—simply that, and I should have understood the call. Alas! however, on this occasion as on others, the Emperor thought nothing of the conscience and reputation of those whom he employed. He was unhappy . . . I say no more. . . . Had I been able, I would gladly have banished this from my thoughts. Determined as I was to do my full duty towards him, but also towards my country whose interests were so dear to me, I tried to forget this incident.

Ojarowski was back at eight o'clock in the morning; all the anxieties of the Allies and the Provisional Government were dispelled. The Prince of Neuchâtel's replies informed us that that officer had been fully reassured; and everyone, so we found, was in the best possible mood. The Tsar received us favourably, spoke again of the letter which had caused last night's mistake, and told us that anybody would have been taken in by it. He let us see General [Defrance]'s letter, added that he was at a loss to account for it, paid us many compliments, and sought by countless courteous gestures to make us forget what had taken place. During the day, he sent for me to discuss this incident again; he gave me clear proof of his indignation over the action of the officer who had caused that misunderstanding; and he added, with marked kindliness, that he would do his best to make it up to us.

Schwarzenberg, after raising various new objections over the terms of the armistice, referred it to the Tsar and was ordered to sign (April 8). Of course, that document was couched in terms of the necessity that imposed it on us; but at least it did give certain promises of tranquillity to the

area beyond the line of demarcation—and that meant much to the departments, and to the status of the Emperor and Empress. As for the treaty, Nesselrode debated more than three hours with us over a counter-proposal which merely laid down bases; nor did he discuss anything beyond the Emperor's personal concerns. There no longer was any mention of points relative to the army and to matters of national interest, such as they had promised earlier to negotiate with us. Those questions were perforce cut out, as falling within the sphere of the Provisional Government; but the negotiations that we thought were important, since through them we hoped to halt the train of events, were of no moment. The intention was to seem actively concerned over our affairs, in order to make amends to us for last night's scene, and at a pinch to calm the irritation of certain tempers; but at bottom there was nothing but an effort to gain time.

The British and Austrian Ministers had not yet arrived; it suited their convenience not to come until everything had worked itself out. If, on the one hand, the Tsar had originally been anxious, because of the uneasiness inspired by the French Army, to contrive something that would lull its irritation and put a stop to all activity, now, on the contrary, both he and the Provisional Government had had their minds entirely set at rest by the disaffection and submission of numerous generals and officers, by desertions from the ranks, by the course of events in Paris and in several of the departments as well; wherefore he was now in small haste to settle with us. The longer one waited, the more the new cause felt its strength—and the better was its position for imposing on us what conditions it pleased. Before the treason of the Duke of Ragusa, we were plenipotentiaries of a power and of an army which they treated with respect. Afterwards we were actually nothing but *commissaires de la pitié*. Out of our very concern for the Emperor, we were compelled to subscribe to everything.

The Tsar Alexander, who, in the name of his allies and in his own name, had accepted all our demands in the first instance, now wished to defer a conclusion until it suited the

convenience of the Allied Ministers—who were in no hurry to arrive.[1]

On the 5th, the Senate had proclaimed Louis Stanislas Xavier to be King of France. Now it was busying itself with a constitution, so called—or rather the Prince of Benevento

[1] Excerpt from the Duke of Vicenza's report to the Emperor, covering events during the earlier part of April 8:

"As to the French Army's future lot, everything is promised: circumstances require it. Rank and grade, emoluments and titles —all, so it is said, will be confirmed; but such will by no means be true of the endowments from outside France. Speaking of which, it is plain to be seen that, although circumstances compel the ministers to discretion on this point as well, those endowments are lost. All the personal sacrifices which Your Majesty is willing to make will not suffice to assure those incomes; for we are in no position to defend them, and the Royal Government will surely not make it its duty to do so, creditable though such fulfilment might be. If only this loss, which means the ruin of us all, were to fall on none but those who have some little patrimony, or who have deserted you! For my own part, I shall find consolation for these cares; but how many brave fellows there are who, having no other bread to put in their childrens' mouths, will find themselves without resources! Such, I believe, Sire, is the way matters stand—or at least how they appear to me. What I could wish above all (if it is impossible to settle up what pertains to Your Majesty and the army without all the Sovereigns being assembled) would be to procure at least a signed statement guaranteeing the promises that have been made; but nothing any longer depends on us. Our gait is controlled by the sweet will of the foreign ministries. The most I can say to Your Majesty is that the Tsar is, and will be, as good as his word. Paris has avenged Moscow. He will be liberal. That suits both his rôle and his nature. He will demand nothing of France. Sure of having the Duchy [of Warsaw], consenting to let Austria take over Italy and to allow England whatever acquisitions she may find convenient, there is only one thing that matters to him now, namely: to get through as soon as possible, in order to return home and bring his vast empire back to life.

"As for the Austrians, I can only repeat to Your Majesty what I have had the honour of telling you: Prince Schwarzenberg's tone remains unchanged, proving to me that Your Majesty has hopes of them, and more especially of your father-in-law's sentiments and principles, which his policy will most certainly prevent you from realizing." (*Archives de Caulaincourt*, file 13; draft in the duke's own hand.)

was beguiling the credulity of the Senators with that act, which, as he was well assured, would be rejected by divine right as soon as Restoration was proclaimed.[1]

Since the 7th, they had been organizing the deserters from the army and forming them into a corps for the King, under the orders of Count Brancas, Chamberlain to the Emperor, Adjutant-General of the National Guard.

On the 8th, Marshal Oudinot had felt obliged to send in his declaration of adherence, and to subjoin those of the Second, Seventh, and Eleventh Infantry Corps, and the Fifth and Sixth Cavalry. It was on the 7th that the Duke of Danzig had felt it his duty to set an example of submission; he had been imitated by General Amiel. General Lagrange, Inspector of Gendarmerie, Marshals Jourdan and Kellermann, and Count Michaud had felt it their duty to imitate Oudinot by sending in their declarations also on the 8th, along with the Second Division of the Old Guard, the Young Guard, and the dragoons. And now on April 9 came the submission of Arch-Chancellor Cambacérès, Prince of Parma. In a word, it was wholesale surrender.

Officials, citizens, soldiers, all apparently were in haste to obey even that Provisional Government which was merely the invaders' ministry and the agency of the enemy's troops—inasmuch as France was surrendered unconditionally, with no guarantee whatsoever, to the Allies, and without so much as a mention of the question of peace-terms, and was abandoned to the influence or generosity of the masters of armies in occupation of our territory. Never did a country find itself in a like situation; for although the army might seem to be in a state of armistice, actually, from then on, that force was under the control of a government set up by foreigners and wholly dedicated to them. Unquestionably, the army was no longer any safeguard to our independence, should the enemy find it to their advantage to abuse their power to the

[1] Vitrolles, Pasquier, and Viel-Castel all tell at great length of the vicissitudes through which the Senatorial Constitution passed before it was virtually abolished (May 2, 1814) by the Declaration of Saint-Ouen.

limit. Under those gloomy auspices, and supported by nothing but our zeal and devotion for an unhappy prince and for his august family thus shamefully deserted, we continued to negotiate; for it was manifest from then on that our sole support lay in the confidence inspired in us by a sovereign's word of honour. So demoralized had public sentiment become, and so great was the necessity, felt by all, of standing in the good graces of the rising government, that all bounds of decency were overstepped in order to arrive the sooner. Finally (so low was the level of self-respect), the Duke of Ragusa, who unquestionably had fought like a man after Paris was attacked, and had given in only to necessity and after a specific order from King Joseph to surrender—Ragusa, I say, was not ashamed to accept public thanks from the municipal authorities[1] for his pretence of having taken the capitulation upon himself, and thus of having saved the capital from destruction, to which, so he let it be understood, the Emperor had consigned it by an alleged order that never existed.[2] The marshal-duke did not sense that he was procuring thanks for having betrayed his trust. How clearly he failed to perceive that on that day the real citizen was the soldier; that failing to do the impossible meant renouncing the rank that more than once he had won amongst the brave! In such a situation, the best of intentions do not protect a man from infamy; and when one accepts eulogies of that sort, one must take the consequences.

[1] On April 5 Marmont gave an audience to the City Council of Paris. The address delivered by that body, together with the marshal's response, were published in the *Moniteur* of April 6.

[2] The *Journal des Débats* of April 5 reported that on March 30 Alexandre de Girardin had brought the Ministry of War an order to blow up the powder magazine in the Plain of Grenelle. It was alleged that this atrocity was prevented only by the insubordination of Major Louis-Edouard Maillard de Lescourt, superintendent of the artillery park in the Champ de Mars. A full vindication of Girardin was carried by the same publication's issue of April 12. M. Albert Malet has proved that no such order could possibly have been authentic, thus confirming Pasquier (*Mémoires*, II, 235) and Pons de L'Hérault, *De la bataille et de la capitulation de Paris* (Paris, 1928). Cf. A Bègis, *Ordre donné par l'empereur Napoléon de faire sauter la poudrière de Grenelle* (Besançon, 1902).

This dispiriting *précis* of the state of affairs on the 9th, when nothing had yet been signed or so much as resolved on, and when our hopes rested on nothing but pledges already half melted away, will give some notion of our anxiety. Happily, the Emperor had no knowledge of the greater part of these submissions and this wholesale desertion. But we—what suffering we had to endure, witnessing those events and in full touch with them! What then took place at the Palace of Fontainebleau was not calculated to assuage our grief; everything combined to make our situation more painful.

The Emperor, while he was still free to choose, had agreed to everything in the belief that he was yielding to dire necessity. For the past day or two, however, he had sanctioned the underhand activities of certain men who were more zealous than discreet.

That had led to displays of unquestionable loyalty on the part of the private soldiers generally and of some officers in particular.[1] However, those displays put no stop either to desertion or to the declarations of adherence; and thus it was borne in upon the Emperor that he could no longer delude himself about the seriousness or the present consequences of the disorder which he had clearly foreseen when he abdicated. He saw plainly that what he had taken, three days before, to be assurances of devotion and therefore guarantees of success, were less substantial than he wanted them to be; that any manœuvre was risky if not impossible, and would prove a forlorn hope because of the small number who would follow him; and that any isolated show of force would end by embarrassing him to no purpose. He saw clearly that this alleged fervour was nothing but a vain notion on the part of certain brave officers and men; that generals and division-chiefs and virtually everybody else intended to desert him, whether they had yet done so in fact or not. His better judgement and the lessons of experience were outweighed, however, by the state of mind natural to one in his position; by the vacillation growing out of his misfortunes; by his venturesome disposition, and such confidence as he still felt in what too long

[1] See page 241, note 1.

had been his lucky star. Whilst there remained any hope of escaping the harsh choice that he had had to make, he would have been willing for anyone to take risks on his behalf. And so he let things slide, giving no thought to the consequences that the slightest incident might have.

All in all, he looked on, was non-committal, stood ready to sanction or repudiate whatever happened, and was inclined, out of common sense and resignation both, to abide by what he had agreed to in sending us to Paris.

In the eyes of certain individuals at Fontainebleau, we were traitors—and in Paris we were looked on as conspirators. At heart, so I believe, the Emperor gave us due credit; but he said nothing. Our position, therefore, was worse than ticklish, embarrassed as we were by the occasional indiscretions of our colleague the Prince of the Moskowa, whether in speaking of the Emperor or of the morale and condition of the army, where lay our sole support, and which it was to our interest, consequently, to represent as being firmly united and unswerving in its devotion to its Sovereign. Ney's outbursts went to prove his patriotism, no doubt; but his candour lent nothing to the success of our affairs, and cost more than it was worth as proof of his zeal for the cause he had undertaken to defend.

On the same day, April 9, I had a long conference with Nesselrode, a sequel to the one he had had with us the evening before, and out of which yet another task had grown. My colleagues appointed me to take the arrangement of the details of this preliminary discussion in hand, so as to come to the earliest possible conclusion.

In a late audience granted me by the Tsar, he had mentioned how suitable it would be for us to reach an understanding with the Provisional Government, so as to hasten the settling of our affairs and to procure, also, the inclusion in our treaty of matters pertaining to the army—questions which we were trying to reintroduce, despite his declaration, made several days ago, that the dethronement had deprived us of that privilege. Although this bait was held out to me deliberately, I was not deceived by it. Therefore I declined the proposal, asserting

that the Emperor Napoleon was dealing with him, Alexander, as between one Power and another; a fact that ruled out the Provisional Government which claimed to have supplanted him, and to which we could not give the slightest recognition. In an audience which he granted on the morrow[1] to my colleagues and myself, he again laid stress on this proposal I had warned them beforehand. We declined emphatically; and to the reasons which I had advanced in support of my refusal, we added that the Tsar's word had brought us there, that we were negotiating with him in the name of a power which could not recognize the said government, and that he alone, since he was aware of what he had promised us, could bring his work to a close.

The Tsar insisted that we should see the members of the Provisional Government individually if we were not willing to attend their session. My colleagues joined in my refusal to do so. The Tsar replied that then there would be no end to our business: whatever pertained to the army necessarily concerned France; the Emperor's past interests were bound up with the country's, and even his future concerns bore upon it from certain aspects. These details would devolve upon the French Government in any case; and it was a waste of time to handle them through the intervention of himself or his Minister. His proposal was intended to save time. Since we refused to see Talleyrand or anyone else, then let us complain no more over so-called delays: nothing stood in the way of concluding our business now, except the childish difficulties that we raised ourselves. I refused to agree to this change, and my colleagues backed me up. It was easy to see that this saving of time would not be in the least advantageous to us; that the Tsar and his Minister—truth to tell, we did overwhelm them with our demands and our continued objections—would be the sole gainers by this change, which would serve only to rid them of us. It was the Provisional Government that clogged the whole procedure; once delivered into its hands, our case was lost. Since it had made us no promises, it was bound by none of what had gone before.

[1] April 10, 1814.

To reject our demands *in toto* would not have embarrassed it in the least. Meanwhile, holding out for the promises the Tsar had made, I would not yield an inch.

We had of course been obliged to cut down our demands, limiting them to what the Tsar now seemed disposed to entertain. At other hands, however, this trifle would have shrunk to nothing. And so we declined to accept that proposal, conceding only that we would agree to it if it were indispensable to a speedy finish, once the broad terms had been established. When the discussion of certain articles had made some revision necessary, the Tsar referred us to Nesselrode. We were wearing the Tsar out; he did not have a moment to himself; everything fell on his shoulders, and he was working night and day. We owe it to him to say that for all that, the courtesy of his address never flagged for a moment. He gave us his attention, heard us out, and let us argue as though our affairs were all that he had to attend to. My colleagues turned the conference with Nesselrode over to me, and after four hours of discussion we were no nearer to agreement. I took cover behind the Tsar's promises. Nesselrode did not repudiate them: but when obstacles came up in the shape of certain unforeseen remarks, the Provisional Government refused to agree.

Since he could not, or rather would not, force either side to give way, the Russian Minister was in a very embarrassing position. He was prepared, so he said, to throw the weight of his master's influence into the scale on our behalf, towards the success of a matter in which he had given us grounds for hope; but in order to do so, it would be necessary to see the Provisional Government or one of its members, and debate. On the other hand, there was an unwillingness to support certain of our claims which had been admitted in principle, but which now were considered excessive.

Between the two viewpoints, Nesselrode found himself embarrassed in the extreme; nor were we in a better position —myself especially. For I sensed that such goodwill as the Tsar still felt would not carry over to the point of insistence; that if we forced him to decide one way or the other, his own

policy and that of his allies (whose wishes he could turn to advantage by making them paramount to his—even to the extent of excusing his involuntary failure to keep his word) would not lead him to side with us. The question, then, was to calculate what degree of resistence was equal to the remaining margin of goodwill; and in the midst of the enemy's camp, this was no easy balance to strike.

I advised my colleagues of these particulars and difficulties, of which they had already caught some inkling at the first conference with the Russian Minister, and at a second one. They were then of the opinion that certain formalities would have to be waived in order to reach the goal. The longer conclusion was deferred, the worse state we would be in; wherefore such items as concerned the Provisional Government would have to be discussed with its members, with the proviso that nothing be settled unless direct with Russia, who had made commitments to us and who had no personal interest in subjecting us to excessive terms. I insisted that, since the Tsar's word was all the credit we had, we should do no conferring with members of the Provisional Government unless Nesselrode made a third, and in a third party's house, so that we would always have the appearance of dealing with Russia alone. My colleagues heartily approved this proposal; and they begged me to conduct the negotiation in my dual capacity as the Emperor's Minister for Foreign Affairs and one of his plenipotentiaries.

When I had informed Nesselrode of this agreement, he arranged with Talleyrand for a meeting at my sister's house, where I was stopping; and they came there that same night.[1] As I have already said, our demands were restricted to what had been discussed with Nesselrode and previously agreed to —more or less—by the Tsar, but constantly rejected by the Provisional Government, which held it of the first importance

[1] Thiers (XVII, 791) is the only one to refer to this meeting between the plenipotentiaries and Talleyrand at the Baroness de Saint-Aignan's. Macdonald does not mention it. Caulaincourt's subsequent account of this interview presents facts hitherto unknown.

that the Emperor should not have Elba—that he should be far removed from Europe, and his family too; otherwise, it declined to be a party to any treaty, or to accord the Emperor any recognition. So terrified was it by the Elba establishment, that, according to what I was assured of afterwards, it made a last appeal to Nesselrode (after having tried every means, direct and otherwise, to make the Tsar go back on his word) to bring pressure to bear once more upon that prince. He is said to have replied: "I gave my promise—these gentlemen have too soon forgotten under what circumstances. Because circumstances have changed their complexion, that does not release me from my word."

Nesselrode persisted, broaching the matter again; and the next day he reported to the Provisional Government that the Tsar had frowned on their proposal—that he would advise them not to mention it to him again, seeing that Alexander would sooner repudiate the Restoration than be false to his word. Nesselrode added that the Tsar had gone so far as to tell him angrily that sovereigns were not weathercocks, shifting with every breeze like certain revolutionary individuals. These words, which were repeated a few days later by the Duke of Dalberg, and afterwards by General Beurnonville and others, shed a great light over that period.

In the conference with Nesselrode and Talleyrand that evening, the latter insisted, at the outset, upon treating the questions only as generalities. As it had been easy to foresee, he did not wish to commit the French Government to anything, or in any way, in respect of the Emperor Napoleon. What he wanted, was, as he put it, to exempt the Royal Government from any act soever that would recognize the past as having occurred; and he was noncommittal about the future. According to him, we ought to be satisfied with the treaty Their Majesties signed with us, since France did not signify her refusal to agree to it, as between her and them. I countered by saying that, since certain costs were bound to devolve upon France, she was, in the Emperor's view, the chief party involved; he was abdicating in favour of her and

her interest; and therefore the Royal Government, as his successor, should, as soon as it was organized, furnish us with a ratification or bill of accession. That, said the Prince of Benevento, would mean the pointless imposition upon the King of something distasteful to him. And that, said I, would mean the sacrificing, for the sake of mere vanity and considerations purely personal, of a title guaranty, a major assurance, which not even the Emperor could afford to do without. According to Talleyrand, the signatures of all the sovereigns of Europe ought to be guaranty enough for us. Any demand or stipulation beyond that, so it seemed to him, was annoying and certain to cause friction, since there was no point to it. "That," he told me once more, "would provoke irritation against me, without helping my cause." The assurance that such was the case, I answered, seemed to me only one proof the more that it was my duty to stand my ground. It was my duty to protect the Emperor, not to worry whether I offended the King. As was proper, then, I held out for the French Government's recognition and guaranty.

As for the National cockade, the Legion of Honour, and other questions pertaining to the army, as well as to the establishment outside France that was to be settled upon the Emperor and his family: Talleyrand summarily refused to enter into formal discussion of the Tricolour cockade and what he called our pretensions. These delicate questions he regarded as matters not only French but European, and consequently as subjects to be discussed by every cabinet, or else handled by the Tsar in person, who alone could assume so grave a responsibility. The Provisional Government, I replied, should have assumed far different obligations for the success of their cause, when the Tsar had assumed that one. No responsibility could terrify a prince who had made a promise which the dictates of a wise, forward-looking policy would oblige him to keep, in order to put a stop to an affair which might take a different turn altogether if the army knew that there was now a disposition to question every promise that had been made. We had not yet laid down our

arms, I told him; and if the Tsar did not stand between the Provisional Government and us, war would soon be resumed.

He found that all our demands on behalf of the Emperor, his family, and the Empress Josephine were exorbitant, and he rejected them as inadmissable in every respect. According to him, they would have to be reduced to twenty-five thousand francs annuity apiece. I gave way a little on some points; on others I persisted and held my ground. Finally, thanks to the measure of approval which the Tsar had given to our first proposals, and with the intervention of Nesselrode, who steadily pursued the line laid down for him by his august master's promises, after more than three hours of discussion I carried virtually all my points. As for those which Talleyrand was unwilling to concede, or on which it embarrassed him to give an opinion, he answered: "That is provided for," or "That is Their Majesties' concern," or "The Provisional Government will not agree to that." Even so, this conference was a long step forward in the negotiations concerning the Emperor's interests, and his family's.

The further we went, the more convinced we became that we would have to reconcile ourselves to submission and be satisfied with such observance as they cared to keep of the pledges made to the army. Everybody was coming to a private understanding; all wanted to establish claims upon the favour of the expected prince. Each day it was announced that the Count of Artois was at hand. He was to hold title as Lieutenant-General of the Realm, and he was most anxious to make his entry. I protested to the Tsar that to admit that prince and proclaim the Restoration before the treaty had been signed with us and ratified by the Emperor would be a violation of formal pledges, and might lay us open to violence by the troops. Alas! if the prince had made his entry into Paris, the ranks at Fontainebleau would have thinned out still more and we should no longer have got a hearing. The Tsar replied that Their Majesties had given instructions for Monsieur d'Artois to keep his distance until the treaty was signed and one could be certain of the army's total submission. I

had been assured that some presumptuous acts by members of the Count of Artois's *entourage*, Monsieur's own refusal to wear the national cockade,[1] the unreasonableness of the Provisional Government, and the zealous bungling of Bourbon agents in Paris all had succeeded more than once in rousing the ire of our good foreign tutors, and had largely cooled their zeal for Restoration. In the salons of the King of Prussia, and in the Tsar's, they were beginning to say out loud that it would be best not to urge those princes to hasten their arrival, that they would be more hindrance than help to the success of their cause.

The impulse had been given, however, and men of the highest repute followed on like sheep. Apparently there was more fear of being the last to join success than of being the first to desert misfortune. France, the army, and its chief—its hero and benefactor—were delivered up, bound hand and foot; so great was the haste to follow the Senate's example of selfish cowardice.

All honour, then to the Duke of Taranto, who never once belied his loyalty and steadfastness. But for him, and for the Tsar's respect for his own word, I know not what would have happened to the Emperor or what he could have secured, for, excepting the Duke of Taranto and myself, His Majesty had not a single defender in Paris. This fact ought to be an aid to reflexion on the part of princes whose whole trust is in their flatterers; for Macdonald and I, in our respective capacities, were certainly the two men whom the Emperor loved the least, to whom he had shown the least favour, and who repeatedly had shown him the most opposition.

At Fontainebleau the Emperor was losing all patience because matters did not progress at a faster rate. These delays in his opinion, revealed a secret scheme to jeopardize

[1] See page 238, note 1. On April 10 Vitrolles had written Talleyrand from Chalons that the Count of Artois was agreeable to entering Paris as a National Guardsman; "but the prince," he adds, "will not leave off his cockade." (Vitrolles, *Mémoires*, I, 373.)

him, or perhaps even to attempt his life.[1] He was uneasy. And who knows what was hatching in the murk at Paris? Treason does not shrink from one crime the more.

His Majesty, betrayed on virtually all hands and deserted by those whom he had made rich, might well fear anything and view all with misgivings as he noted the changes which ten days had wrought in his position. "Woe to the vanquished!"—that was the order of the day. However, the Emperor was vanquished only by treachery; by the force, the irresistible sweep, of circumstances conspiring to turn him over to the vengefulness of the whole of Europe united against him. His glory had outlasted his good fortune. A section of the Old Guard and the trusty Poles had rioted throughout the evenings of the 6th and 7th, when some soldiers had scoured the roads shouting: "*Vive l'Empereur!* Death to the traitors!" Wise heads had let it be understood how disquieting those demonstrations were, and what the consequences might be. They expressed themselves so strongly to persons close to the Emperor that that shouting stopped. For a moment, those demonstrations had roused the Emperor's hopes, but, shrewd observer that he was, he quickly perceived that the possibility of retrieving everything had found no expression until after all was lost; that certain of the men who led these cheers to-day had held their peace when it was really possible, perhaps, to retrieve everything by risking all. And so that effervescence subsided.

Our friends—and others—wrote from Fontainebleau, giving us these details and urging us to let the ebullience die down if it should continue after our treaty was signed. The great body of generals, officers, and recruits—in a word, the nation, except for certain areas which had suffered at the enemy's hands—had no such energy or enthusiasm. Unhappily, the Emperor had pushed things to the breaking point. Individuals and the nation alike found themselves in one of those situations where, believing one's powers exhausted, one

[1] Pasquier, through Bassano, had warned the Emperor of the plots that were being hatched against his life. (Pasquier, *Mémoires*, II, 287)

swims with the stream, no longer struggles to escape the plain danger ahead, and—dire fatality—does nothing to avoid it. In order to form any idea of that epoch, one would have had to see it. Nobody wanted anything but rest; everyone longed for peace at any price, dreaming of it as the homesick recruit dreams of seeing his village steeple. "Patience, courage!" he hears. "Pluck up the strength to regain your native land!" The poor wretch despairs of the happiness he desires so ardently, and he lets himself die because he cannot have his wish that very moment. Such was our history at this epoch of misfortune. Fear lest peace escape—lest the Emperor recover his power only to abuse it—put everything to the sacrifice and made seeming saviours of those who were imposing such shameful terms on us peacemakers.

As for us, our duty in the circumstances was to prevent a civil war which now could accomplish nothing for France's salvation. It was our obligation to save the Emperor—to assure a proper living for him, as well as for his family; and we proceeded fearlessly towards that objective.

Affairs were moving forward a little, however slowly. I conferred with Nesselrode several times a day. I had no further conferences with the members of the Provisional Government; their opposition to the questions under discussion was too outspoken to make argument with them worth while. The declarations of adherence of Generals Sébastiani, Chouard, Lefort, and Tilly came the way of many another.

Count Metternich and Lord Castlereagh came at last to Paris [April 10], and we might therefore hope to bring this painful negotiating to a close. We were holding discussions with Nesselrode several times daily over his objections and counter-proposals, and one might say that the articles of the treaty were as good as settled.

I leave to other pens the detailed relation of all the Provisional Government's activities, and of the Senate's debates over its transient constitution. The Senate expected to send a deputation with it to the King, but in respect of this they were tricked once more by the Prince of Benevento: that

Act of theirs was taken to England by Boson de Périgord, who was not even a Senator.[1] There was general astonishment not over this choice, but because those pliant Senators and the bustling M. Lambrechts, who had been the hard-working agency of everything that was done towards Restoration,[2] had not been allowed to send a deputation in Périgord's support. The impropriety of delivering the social contract in this way gave instant proof of how much reliance might be placed in that constitution. And now the Prince of Benevento, thinking that the Count of Artois's presence in Paris would set seal to the Restoration, which was his handiwork, and would bring the more recalcitrant provinces and contingents of the army into line, took quick advantage of the Senate's signing of its Constitutional Act and summoned the Prince to Paris. According to some, his real intention was to get the Prince to accept the Constitution in the King's name, thus furnishing to the nation the safeguard which he had promised it, and which in Paris was so generally desired. However, Their Majesties opposed this concession to the general demand for the same reasons as before. The Provisional Government and everybody who was "in the know" maintained, besides, that the Prince would give instant proof of how much reliance might be placed in that constitution. Talleyrand had therefore believed it possible to invite the Prince to come, although he was not to appear in Paris until after he had accepted the constitution in the King's name—as if the Bourbon dynasty could sanction an act which seemingly was being forced upon it when it was free to dictate whatever terms it saw fit (since no conditions had been imposed on it), and which consequently it was in no position to accept. But the delayed arrival of the Count of Artois, over which there

[1] Boson-Jacques de Talleyrand-Périgord (1764–1830), the Prince of Benevento's brother. According to the *Souvenirs du comte de Sémallé* (Paris, 1898), "At the moment when the King was to return, M. de Talleyrand sent his nephew [*sic*], Boson de Périgord, to take him a letter from Mme. de Coigny telling him what line of behaviour he should pursue."

[2] See page 95, note 3.

was a diversity of opinion, was not dependent on those considerations: it depended on the signing of our treaty. Many considerations, as I have already said, moved the Sovereigns to postpone that return. They took that precaution because they were not anxious for the Prince to commit any actions in Paris before the treaty of abdication had been signed.

On April 10 the Prince of Neuchâtel's aide-de-camp, M. Girardin, was despatched to me by the Emperor with a letter bearing the signature of His Majesty's secretary, Baron Fain, who asked me for the Instrument of Abdication. A covering letter from Fain informed me that the enclosure was dictated by the Emperor.[1] This second demand through a third party, when there was nothing to prevent His Majesty

[1] The following two letters (Fain to Caulaincourt, *Archives*, file 13), new to history, are here printed in full as sidelights indispensable to the understanding of Napoleon's mental processes at this period. The words italicized in the second letter are underlined in Napoleon's hand.

"*Fontainebleau, April* 9, 1814.—My Lord, every word of the official communication hereunto attached has been dictated to me from start to finish. Not the slightest revision of it is from my hand. I ask permission of Your Grace to add the enclosed package for Rumigny, together with word that his brother has been promoted colonel. With which, etc.—BARON FAIN."

"*Fontainebleau, April* 9, 1814, 12 *noon*.—My Lord, the Emperor has ordered me to write you as follows. Orderly officer Gourgaud having just come in, His Majesty thinks it your duty to return to him the document which he merely entrusted to your sense of honour; said document being, moreover, incomplete. His Majesty has instructed Gourgaud tell you this; wherefore he has no doubt that you will comply with what he intended.

"The Emperor has given the Empress orders to remain at Orléans because, as soon as the arrangement Your Grace is negotiating for has been settled, the Emperor will set out to join the Empress at Montargis and so make his way through the Midi from there. If there must be a delay anywhere, His Majesty would far rather stop at Montargis or Auxerre than at any other place soever, Fontainebleau seeming to him an unsuitable abode at present.

"Porto Ferrajo and Porto Langone, if they are to be safe from Turks, Barbary pirates, and certain other cruisers, must have a garrison of between 1,500 and 1,600 men. His Majesty will take with him some 7 or 800 men of his Old Guard who wish to follow

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from writing and signing himself, moved me, I confess, to reflect sorrowfully upon the Emperor's style of acknowledging

him. The balance to be supplied from local recruits or such as may turn up thereafter.

"The detail of 1,200 to 1,500 men of the Guard seems to His Majesty sufficient to escort him on his way, but an Austrian officer and a Russian would be useful, and seem indispensable besides.

"The desire manifested at Paris to appropriate all private property seems to His Majesty unjust in the extreme; but as for that, His Majesty no longer cares anything about mere matters of self-interest.

"The Emperor will probably designate General Flahaut to take possession of the territory of the Island of Elba. It is necessary that Austrian, Russian, and British commissioners be on the spot as soon as possible to prepare the terms of transfer.

"The Emperor believes it would be more convenient to embark at Saint-Tropez or in the roads of the Islands of Hyères than to be obliged to traverse the Estrelle [*sic*] and go all the way to Villefranche. What matters is that Admiral Ganteaume or some marine officers of the Guard should be in charge of navigation until Elba is reached, and that the territory should have been taken possession of beforehand.

"If the Emperor of Austria or Metternich have arrived in Paris as reported, you should attempt to see them. It is the Emperor's desire that you shall persuade them that henceforth his person is not dangerous to them. It is the Emperor's hope that they will feel it incumbent upon their honour to settle the Empress's future in fitting fashion, which can not be done except with Tuscany. The Emperor wishes neither to go to Tuscany nor to govern that territory; they may rest assured of that point. As for himself, the Emperor asks nothing. Finally, if unforeseen complications chance to arise so that this is not all clear and the Allies do not agree, the Emperor would see no objection (if that were agreeable to the British Government) to his going to live in England with his wife and son *under guarantee of the English nation.* There would then be need of no treaty, nor any territorial cession.

"As to funds, those being with the Empress's suite, they are not so considerable as one would seem to imagine. Much cash having been drawn from this reserve for the Guard, and His Majesty having ordered a million paid out of it to each one of his brothers and sisters by way of providing for their needs during these present developments, the amount that remains of it is no longer worth bothering over.

"I have the honour, etc.—BARON FAIN."

and using my devotion. For only an order such as it was possible to show my colleagues could have enabled me then to hesitate over the use I was bound to make of the document which he had confided in my care. His position had in no-wise changed. On the contrary; it was more precarious and difficult than ever. A few signs of devotion by veterans of the Guard, a few by some men of the corps that came in from Spain—these could not offset the disadvantages of his predicament. He could not be unaware that his abdication had even caused some hesitation about allowing him to hold the review of the Second and Seventh Corps which he had ordered.[1] The remarks of their commander, the Duke of Reggio, with whom he had spoken when the review was over in order to find out whether he could count on the loyalty of that force (they had received him with hearty cheers), must have left no doubt in his mind about the sentiments of the generals and commanding officers. And since then, as his abdication became more widely known, it had dissolved all ties: everyone already felt freed of oaths and obligations to him. Nevertheless, the Emperor who had busied himself the day before yesterday with a project for joining up with the Army of Italy—the Emperor who thought even now to rally the Duke of Castiglione's forces and operate along the Loire with the *braves* who would follow him—that same Emperor had not released until last evening his order, dated the 5th, in refutation of the Senate's Act of Dethronement. By that means he tried to rouse sentiment in the army, but he was too late; the moment had slipped past him. It had no

[1] According to Koch (*Campagne de* 1814, II, 600), during the night of April 6–7, after the plenipotentiaries had left, Napoleon worked out with the Duke of Bassano a scheme for joining forces with the Army of Italy; and then, it being the morning of the 7th, he ordered a review of the Second and Seventh Corps. The Duke of Reggio demurred, but ordered the troops to muster at noon in the Cheval Blanc courtyard. The men cheered for the Emperor. Koch confirms Caulaincourt's next remark by saying that directly after the parade Napoleon sent for Oudinot, who refused to assure him that his army corps would obey orders, in view of the abdication.

effect except on a few veterans, grown accustomed to victory under his command. All the rest, though still with the colours, were detached from his cause by anxiety for peace and by dread of civil war, which nobody was willing to engage in—and also, it must be said, by the hope of advantage to be gained from submission to the new order of things.

As before, the Emperor had no definite plan whatever. He wished, as I have already said, to rouse the enthusiasm of a few *braves* and see what effect that outburst would have on the others, and what he could hope for from them. He was too shrewd a calculator, too much the statesman, not to sense that every hour's delay cost him some followers, and that, while he was still free to act, the most necessary thing of all was to set up his standard some leagues from Fontainebleau, even if he did not yet judge it opportune to declare that his plans had changed.

This move, which he could instruct us to announce as a wish on his part to be nearer the Empress and the road he must take, was essential as a means of gauging opinion and making his friends declare themselves. For his prolonged stay at Fontainebleau seemed to all eyes a confirmation that he meant to abdicate; and it kept the most devoted in a state of uncertainty, to say the least. At any moment the abdication might be ratified, wherefore it was necessary to make a decision—and that was what he did not do. His secret moves to test opinion led to nothing and gave the appearance of private intrigues, thus keeping the most devoted and the most disloyal alike in suspense; tempers were worn out; honest men were angered, and nothing was accomplished by that.

What Girardin told me confirmed my belief that the Emperor had recaptured some of his illusions. His uncertainty and his restlessness made him venturesome in his desires, but brought him to a decision on nothing. The hindrances put in the way of concluding the treaty had made him think, as I said above, that there was bad faith—that they were simply waiting for the gradual dissolution of the army in order to

abuse the privileges of force and hold to none of their engagements. The object, so he believed, was to lay hands upon his person, which at the same time was threatened, he thought, by the Provisional Government's assassins. It was those misgivings which drove him to the measures he took.[1] While staying where he was and continuing to entrust himself to the Allies, he yet feared for his life and thought himself lost. He did not see that things had come to such a pass that his safety lay with the Allies alone, and that his true perils lay through such plans of action as would have lost him Allied support and left him to run the risks of civil war and of assassination by the enemies he dreaded. If word of his request to me had happened to leak out, he was lost. For it was precisely the thing to make the Allies abandon him to the Provisional Government, which would have accused the Emperor of breaking all his promises, of wishing to disturb France and the world. That faction would have been delighted to have an excuse for taking him into custody and keeping none of its pledges. Only one who had handled the Emperor's affairs in Paris, as I did, and had encountered all the obstacles that were put in our way, experiencing all that the Provisional Government, out of spitefulness and in bad faith, contrived in order to check and hamper all we did—only then could one form a fair idea of the dangers that would have threatened the Emperor. Only so could one judge what would have happened when once it was felt that all restraint was off.

[1] "While the treaty is being made ready in Paris . . . Napoleon sends courier after courier to demand back from the Duke of Vicenza the paper on which he has signified his abdication. He has been at odds with himself ever since he subscribed to that Instrument. This diplomatic negotiating displeases him; he feels it humiliating, and he believes it futile. . . . 'What is the good of a treaty,' said he, 'since they are unwilling to settle with me where France's interests are concerned? From the moment when it becomes only a question of myself, there is no longer any treaty in question. . . . I am beaten—I yield to the lot of battle. All I demand is that I shall not be a prisoner of war; and a mere cartel should be enough to grant me that!'" (Fain, *Manuscrit de* 1814, 391.)

The Emperor, then, no longer had a faction that was in any state to protect him; and the ranks of his friends would have been worse than thinned out the day it became apparent that it was really dangerous to side with him. The troops, and the nation as well, were already too familiar with the idea of his abdication: no one would have been willing to run much risk in his defence. This vexed question of war or peace was the most dangerous foe he had; for everybody wanted a rest, everybody was for peace, and the very name of it, having dethroned him, lined up the most devoted with the opposition. We might have gone on for several months, fighting a forlorn hope, but, even admitting that this uprising had succeeded, it is doubtful whether it would have been a success, with the state of affairs and of opinion what it then was. The result of this untimely enterprise would have been to cover France with foreign forces; and that was what the Emperor had wanted to avoid in the first place.

It was one thing for him to take the head of a fine army at the outset, and, summoning up all the reserves of his mighty character, perform prodigies and strike hard now at one point, now at another. That would suit the Emperor; the risks of such a war would electrify his genius; his courage delighted in the peril of such combats. But to run the unavoidable risks and perils entailed by the rôle of a guerilla chief—that would not be to the Emperor's taste. And so, judging from all I learned, there was nothing I could see except disadvantage that would result from the efforts which certain ill-advised friends were making to extricate the Emperor from a bad situation and put him into a worse one. I saw no evidence of his having reached a great decision. Therefore, the attempt he had in mind could only compromise him, without offering him the least advantage. The conduct of the Allies gave him plenty of excuses for breaking off. Why not inform me that their bad faith towards him, and their delay, made it his duty to follow the dictates of courage alone? Why not instruct me to bring back his abdication to him, since he had decided to gain by force of arms the honourable terms which

his fair dealing and his love for France had failed to win for him from the fairmindedness of his foes?

Italy was merely the Emperor's pretext for the demand he had had made upon me. For a march towards Italy[1] could no more save that country than it could save France. The act of bad faith for which the Emperor wished to leave me entirely responsible would have accomplished only his ruin and my disgrace. The Emperor had actually done nothing as yet to indicate that he had made up his mind and resolved on some undertaking. He confined himself to letting certain devoted fellows compromise themselves—and that was all. As for myself, he put me in the embarrassing position of having to choose between my loyalty and my conscience: between his momentary caprice and the interests of France, which were his also; for at that moment they were inseparable. There could be no question about my choice. Bound as I was by my word of honour, which I had given in the Emperor's name, I did not hesitate. My reply gave him a faithful explanation of my reasons for refusing; that even for his own interest, I was bound to refuse.[2]

[1] As will appear later, p. 314, Napoleon confided to Caulaincourt that he had an idea of uniting Prince Eugène's forces to those of Augereau, seizing Italy from the Austrians, and setting up a kingdom for himself in the peninsula.

[2] Excerpt from draft of Caulaincourt's letter to the Emperor (*Archives de Caulaincourt*, file 13): "*April* 10, 1814.—Sire, I am in receipt of the letter which Your Majesty had M. Fain write me, and which M. de Girardin has delivered to me. Since Your Majesty has three plenipotentiaries, he is well aware that a hint from his secretary does not enable me to give back again the instructions and powers which he gave us in due form. Were we to break the engagements we have undertaken, it would mean the sacrifice of Your Majesty's ultimate interests. Never would I lay myself under the grave disabilities which would result therefrom.

"I here enclose a copy of the powers given us by Your Majesty, wherein the words '*by virtue of our abdication*' were added by your very hand. We have had to present a copy of this. Therefore it is obligatory for us to deliver that which our very powers proclaim. Your Majesty had my word for it that your Instrument of Abdication would be delivered only after the signing of the treaty with the foreign Powers and following the Provisional

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Amidst the hordes of invaders that covered French and Italian soil, and in face of the general demoralization, of the misgivings which he himself had implanted, and after the abandoning of his cause proclaimed even by himself, could he now hope to regain everything and once more take command of events and Fortune both? Could he hope to change the determination of the monarchs of Europe, after surrendering himself more or less to their discretion? Such, however, were the illusions that partly filled his days. In all truth, the cruel actuality of his situation also made itself felt from moment to moment, shattering the dreams which had beguiled him for an instant or so; but, character being inveterate, he was beneath its sway: at heart he was still the opportunist, and wished to think himself the Man of Destiny. He was seeking to recover at the day's end what he should have conceded at the start; he was deluding himself over Italy as he had deluded himself over France. His mania for the division of power—his wild expectation that thereby his authority would be the better assured, and that thus it would be sufficiently imposing to make his generals and his family sacrifice their dearest interests to his—had lost him the Italy which he might have been able to keep by reuniting it, in time past, under a single authority. That land wished a government of its own. The Italians wanted to be a nation; and for his own advantage the Emperor had placed there authorities who

Government's consent to the arrangements stipulated in his behalf. Those conditions will be faithfully fulfilled.

"The instructions which Your Majesty dictated, and which he had M. de Bassano send to us, likewise specify that we should stipulate '*his abdication.*' Is it then, Sire, my right to surrender, as Your Majesty demands, a document which we have had to show, since that was the only way to gain a hearing? Can I break the engagements undertaken in respect of the Powers when they are fulfilling the conditions which we ourselves have stipulated? We already go here by the name of rebels. —When there never was a sovereign served with more loyalty and devotion, Your Majesty cannot intend to make us knaves. Placed amid circumstances of such gravity, I understand my duty to your honour, your personal safety, and our country; and I am as loyal to the promise I made in your name as I have always been to Your Majesty."

divided the country because their interests were at variance. The King of Naples, carried away by his crazy ambition and his thriftlessness together, had been jealous of the Viceroy, and had become the Emperor's worst enemy. Faithful and devoted, the Viceroy was doing what he could for an unlucky father's cause, and for the sake of his native France, which was ever dear to him. But by that same token he did nothing for Italy—and Italy wanted something done for her. The Emperor had not overlooked these reflexions. He had voiced them himself in my presence.

By making a dash into Italy the Emperor would not better himself at this time. The King of Naples, whose interest already had ranged him beside Austria,[1] would regard the Emperor more than ever as his rival. Or did His Majesty want nothing but the Army of Italy? When he was deserted by a far more compact and imposing force, what might that other one not do, composed as it was of the old bands? What could he expect from Augereau's army, after that marshal had been in touch with the Provisional Government from the day when he learnt what was afoot in Paris? Such, however, was His Majesty's situation at this period. This résumé is complete, with the mere addition that Italy was covered with the enemy's troops, that the Viceroy and Augereau were menaced by superior forces, that Bordeaux had been turned over to the Restoration, and that Toulouse was threatened by the British Army despite the high talent displayed by Marshal Soult in his defence of the Midi. Austria, who coveted Italy for herself, had sent the *élite* of her main forces there. The moment had passed when there might have been some glory and perhaps some success in making a fight of it. The shouts of a few private soldiers could do nothing further for the Emperor's glory and honour. Neither could the desires of a few honest men, with whom, since they would willingly have sold their lives to assure His Majesty a better fate, it was my honour to be numbered. His way to safety lay through resignation. He had felt called upon to sacrifice

[1] Murat had signed a treaty of alliance with the Austrians on January 11, 1814.

his own glory instead of the tranquillity of France—and this lofty act of devotion must go unsullied. Contemporaries, like posterity, must be permitted to believe that that sacrifice, whether or not it seemed worthy at first of a great captain's courage, was an act of political foresight on the grand scale, resulting from a great citizen's devotion. Can that fruit of his love and affection for France, whom he thought to shield against the greatest of misfortunes—can that be condemned by the very Frenchmen who, it must be said, saw nothing at the time beyond the benefits of peace, and deserted the Emperor whom they suspected of wishing to prolong the war?

Reverting to the Emperor's request: I took counsel only with my common sense and my conscience. I replied to him that I would do nothing contrary to his greatest, nay, his sole interest, which, as of that moment, was his personal safety; and never would I do anything against my honour and my country.

At this epoch, however, Fontainebleau afforded a spectacle worthy of any observer's notice and somewhat consoling to a decent man after all the acts of betrayal and cowardice which he witnessed daily. There was an Emperor without empire, and without power, too, since few partisans were left him, and fewer friends who would choose to share his fortunes. Yet he was respected, encompassed with deference, surrounded with courtesy and care more deserving of appreciation, doubtless, than the attentions which had hemmed him round in the days when his power was absolute. And so it continued, I am happy to say, until the last. The behaviour of the Guard and the Poles was something remarkable. All in all, the behaviour of officers and men, in contrast to that of generals and certain generals-in-chief, made the latter appear in a most unfavourable light.

Everything had changed again from what it had been a few days before. In the departments, as at Paris, there was no increase of royalist feeling; but everybody was taking the side of the government that reputedly was restoring peace, and there were no scruples over abandoning the one that was

accused of wanting to go on with the war. All minds had been influenced by the news from Bordeaux, and by the submission of generals, commanders-in-chief, and the Arch-Chancellor. The example set by the behaviour of Paris had likewise exerted strong influence over sentiment in the departments. The Emperor was still at Fontainebleau with the major portion of the army under arms, and more or less under his orders—yet the revolution in favour of Royalism could be regarded as everywhere complete.

I saw Metternich. If I had been cherishing any doubt of the Emperor of Austria's ill intentions towards his son-in-law, Metternich would have destroyed it. He ruled out all that had been proposed in the Tuscan matter. Even the allotting of Parma to the Empress met with his disfavour. She never would have had it if my heated insistence had not been backed by the Tsar, who, having given his word, demanded that his pledges be kept. Metternich seized every possible occasion for showing his displeasure that the idea of indemnities in Italy should have entered anyone's head, and that Alexander should have made us any such promises, which, said he, cost the Tsar nothing. Whatever infringed on Austria's covetousness, Metternich dealt with as impolitic. He cut clear through all family questions by declaring that the Empress ought to be considered merely an arch-duchess, and the King of Rome a prince. In short, the Emperor of Austria's arrival[1] tended rather to the Emperor Napoleon's disadvantage than in his favour. Was Metternich already planning to steal away the Empress from her husband? It was all a question of an interview between her and her father —an interview proposed and eagerly desired by the Emperor Napoleon, in the hope that thereby she would get Tuscany. I never was able to imagine how the Emperor could mislead himself on this point, but nothing would make him abandon the notion. The fatal influence of that epoch seemingly drove him into every course of action that could harm him

[1] More exactly, his Minister's arrival; for Francis did not reach Paris until April 15.

or add to his misfortune. Admittedly, though, one found it hard to believe that on this point the Empress's father would rule contrary to what was the interest of his unhappy daughter, now that the Emperor agreed to make the Island of Elba his personal abode.

The conduct of Prince Schwarzenberg and the Austrian Cabinet, the way the Emperor Francis kept his distance under such circumstances as these—nothing could destroy the Emperor's illusions. No doubt those illusions helped him to keep up hope, and gave him consolation; otherwise I cannot account for his blindness. In all truth, however, I must say that even though there was nothing to indicate goodwill on Austria's part (whether out of policy or respect for the decencies and for the unfortunate), still, at that moment there was nothing which pointed to any intention of separating the Empress from the Emperor—an intention which the Emperor was so far from imputing to his father-in-law that, quite the contrary, he never questioned but that those religious principles which he knew were his, and to which he gladly gave due credit, would lead the Emperor Francis to reunite them for a part of the year at least. Possibly, however, the only reason for Austria's cautiousness in this matter was the discretion that was mandatory with things as they then stood; for although the Empress was separated from our army, she was surrounded by French troops and a detachment of the Guard, whose conduct was exemplary to the very last. Austria could not seize her there: and all her movements were facilitated by the presence of Count Shuvalov, the Tsar's personal aide-de-camp, whom His Majesty had sent on the 8th, at my request, to attend the Empress and be under her orders and see that she was respected by the Allied troops wherever she went. All the Emperor needed to do was move her and her Household nearer to Fontainebleau, or even join up with her himself. I had taken pains to advise the Duchess of Montebello that the general was the Empress's to command, and to have Her Majesty told so; and she herself was most favourably disposed, most solicitous for the Emperor, and all the more anxious to rejoin him because she believed herself put upon by

his brothers, whose supervision was irksome to her and displeasing to him.

But the Emperor was reassured by this very precaution, and by the position this little corps was in; and, feeling certain that whenever he wished he could bring about this reunion to which his own interest and my devotion prompted him, he never even sensed what advantage there would be in seeing the Empress before the interview which he was anxious throughout for her to have with her father, in whose principles he trusted implicitly, since his sole aim was to assure a better existence to the woman he loved and to the son who was the object of all his care. He never so much as dreamed of arranging this interview nearer to where he was, and of surrounding it with the precautions that his situation might seem to demand. Trusting in the tenderness of devotion the Empress showed for him, trusting in what he believed were his father-in-law's principles of religion and politics, and with his decision already made, perhaps, not to survive such disasters as these, he allowed all that was dear to him to remain far from his side, and to the cruel indecency of Austrian politics he surrendered all that remained of his past happiness, all his consolation for the future.

What Russia and Prussia had respected now was ravished from him by the government that had come in his prosperity to offer him the darling child of the most moral prince in Europe. Fatally convinced that under these circumstances the Emperor Francis could not refuse Tuscany to his daughter and his grandson, His Majesty gave direct orders to the Empress, her Household, and the Guard to remain at Orléans.[1] Thus he let slip the opportunity of rejoining his wife—a reunion which, under the circumstances, would have given him a certain degree of security and a great measure of consolation besides. Who knows what effect that reunion might have had upon the future? The fear of exposing the Treasury, which could not keep up with the Empress unless she travelled by short stages; the plan he made and never carried out, first

[1] Marie Louise, having left Blois at 10 a.m. on April 9, arrived at Orléans the same day at 6 p.m.

to fall back along the Loire and then to join up with the Army of Italy—all these factors served to keep up his indecision: and there is good reason to say, as I do in all sorrow, that the thousand-and-one choices he brooded over every day were the cause of his making the worst choice of all.

Finally, on the 9th, the Emperor wrote to the Empress again, telling her to remain at Orléans, where she had gone by his orders and would be, in his opinion, better situated for joining him[1] when he left. Nothing could change this determination of his, nor could anything make the Emperor visualize all the embarrassing aspects of his situation. He saw the major perils of it, the broad political aspects, and that was all. Naturally enough, he could not grow accustomed to seeing that he was dependent upon everyone now, and upon a thousand petty circumstances hitherto unworthy of his notice. Unquestionably he was anxious to rejoin the Empress; that meeting had been the topic of several discussions with me; only a short while before I had pointed out to him again that that reunion was of great importance to him politically, that it was even a warrant of safe-conduct for his voyage. He realized it, seemed to have made up his mind—and then put off doing it, guided by that same fatality which, for the past two years, had led him to postpone all effectual decisions that ran in any way counter to his will.

At the moment when the Austrian Emperor arrived at Paris, the Tuscan question was all the Emperor Napoleon saw. To his mind, since Austria alone opposed the cession of that territory, the Emperor Francis, considering the state to which the Empress had been reduced, could not possibly refuse this indemnity to the tears of his darling daughter. He owed her a great debt of consolation. What was Tuscany compared to the throne of France: Florence beside Paris? But as Metternich expressed it, echoing Schwarzenberg—or Schwar-

[1] During that period of days there was an incessant exchange of letters between the Emperor and Marie Louise, Fain and Méneval. Cf. Méneval, *Napoléon et Marie-Louise* (Brussels, 1843), II, 77; and also Frédéric Masson, *L'Imperatrice Marie-Louise*, 577.

zenberg, rather, echoing him—his august master was obliged to put the emperor in him before the father; he was more firmly bound by his peoples' interest, and, one may add, by his ambition to seize everything, than by the interest of his daughter and his grandson in their unhappiness. Policy knows nothing of the decencies which pity owes to so great a misfortune.

The Emperor and Empress carried on a lively and most affectionate correspondence. That princess showed and expressed to him the noblest and most touching sentiments in his regard. Her correspondence with her father, which the Emperor showed me and afterwards sent me along with her letters to himself, was in the same vein. And so at this moment the Emperor's whole attention centred around her interview with her father; he had great expectations of it for her and her son; he never questioned but that she would afterwards rejoin him, either in France or at Elba. He relied absolutely on her willingness, as he did on the sentiments which Her Majesty expressed in that regard, and on her father's moral and religious scruples which, so he told me many a time, would not permit the Emperor Francis to leave a young woman separated from her husband—especially not at a moment when her husband stood so greatly in need of consolation! More than once, however, he was on the point of having her come to Fontainebleau, from where it would have been quite as easy to arrange for the interview with the Austrian Emperor to take place *between* that town and Paris. But trifling considerations got the better of great ones; and so it came about that the misery of separation from his wife and son was to fill the cup of these great woes to overflowing. He was extremely hurt, so he repeatedly wrote and told me, that, despite the Tsar's invitation and the request that I had made of him, Schwarzenberg had not yet sent an officer to join Shuvalov for the Empress's protection. Princes Esterhazy and Wenzel de Liechtenstein were the first Austrians whom Metternich sent to her. The Empress left for Rambouillet on the 12th by order of the Emperor, who was convinced throughout that

she would secure Tuscany, and that this interview would settle everything.[1]

Messieurs Saint-Aulaire and Bausset, whom she had sent to Paris with a letter for her father, were sent on to him by Metternich. Of their arrival, their departure, and their mission I learned only through hearsay in the course of our conferences and contacts with the foreigners.[2]

I saw Lord Castlereagh in the interest of our affairs. He promised me every safeguard I might desire for the Emperor's journey to Elba—an officer to escort him, and even British frigates for the voyage, if he preferred them. He assured me that England (with whom till now there had been no *pourparlers* whatever) would guarantee, in respect of her own actions, the Emperor Napoleon's unmolested and independent sovereignty over the Island of Elba, over Parma, Piacenza, et cetera; and she would likewise guarantee her assent to those portions of the treaty. He refused, however, to intervene more directly and assent to the remaining clauses. Because the British Government, he pointed out, was a scrupulous keeper of its pledges, it never made promises in matters binding upon a third party, for it did not wish to be responsible for the actions of others, and therefore compelled to take anyone's part over the non-fulfilment of some

[1] Esterhazy and Liechtenstein had gone to Marie Louise with a letter from Metternich, inviting her to proceed to Rambouillet for a meeting with her father. Metternich meanwhile wrote Caulaincourt on the 11th, bidding him propose Rambouillet to the Emperor. Contrary to Caulaincourt's belief, Napoleon had disapproved of the selection of Rambouillet; but the Empress, urged by the two Austrian officers, left Orléans on April 12 at 8 p.m. and reached Rambouillet at noon of the 13th. Cf. Méneval, *Napoléon et Marie-Louise*, II, 97; and Masson, *L'Imperatrice Marie-Louise*, 583.

[2] Bausset left Blois at 11 p.m., April 8, carrying a letter to Francis for delivery at Paris, and one to Napoleon for delivery at Fontainebleau. He arrived in Paris at two in the morning of the 10th. In his *Mémoires* (II, 290), he relates that during the forenoon he saw Caulaincourt and was authorized by him to deliver the Empress's letter to Metternich. Caulaincourt leaves that statement open to question.

stipulation not laid down by it personally. Castlereagh was obliging, definite, frank in his explanations, and most courteous in speaking of the Emperor and discussing whatever might interest him; and he kept all his promises to me. I must confess that I envied the lot of a minister who spoke so definitely in the name of a responsible ministry, and whose every act was bound in consequence to carry the stamp of good faith, and of the foresight which publicity imposes. These same considerations had led the Emperor not only to desire but insist before all else that a British officer should be included among those assigned by the other Powers for his safe-conduct. In this instance his animus against England gave way to his personal interests; he saw a sound promise of real accountability nowhere but in the British officer. He furnished a good safe-conduct on land, and the best passport by sea.

And so I return to our treaty, which at last was nearing its conclusion. The separate clauses, over which I had debated at great length with Count Nesselrode after they had been successively examined and agreed on between my colleagues and myself at our daily meetings, were finally initialled by me and the Russian Minister, who had remained the Coalition's agent during these negotiations, as his sovereign was the soul of it. We had reason, then, to regard this business as completed, since all it needed now was to be sanctioned in due form when the articles were reassembled under head of a single treaty, which was being engrossed for the general conference, set for the next day.

In the interim, however, the Provisional Government and Metternich demanded still further changes in the draft. We were in no position to refuse what was required: during the evening, therefore, everything was settled and finally arranged, supposedly, in the name of all the Powers with which the Russian Minister had consulted throughout, and with the Provisional Government as well, whose interpreter he had become.

As for Metternich, from the very beginning, as I have already said, his tone had destroyed our one remaining hope, already so weakened by the tone Schwarzenberg had taken,

and by all that had come to pass in the army, at Paris, and even in France itself, where the Provisional Government had adroitly extended its power and the Restoration's by sending out commissioners and agents. As I have already said, we were no longer plenipotentiaries: our rôle was limited to signing what was imposed upon us by force when our representations could not overcome the persistence of our adversaries. These last few days, the Provisional Government had skilfully turned all its advantages to profit. All national issues were thrown out; everything pertaining to the army was deferred as no longer pertinent to us. The constitution decreed by the Senate, so we were told in the first instance, had provided for and guaranteed everything. For two days past we had been told besides that since the adherence of its generals had rallied the army to the side of the Provisional Government, all its interests, like those of France, were now entrusted to that Government and no longer concerned us. It had taken over the negotiations, as it had meant to do from the start. What then? Abandoned by all those who owed us their support, and delivered over without recourse to all the Powers of Europe—and what was worse for us, into the hands of the Government of our own country which, like them, had become the bitter enemy of the cause we were defending—there was nothing with which we could oppose that irresistible force of circumstances, the might of that misfortune for which history affords no parallel, except our loyalty to the unfortunate and to his cause; that, and the courage and tenacity of upright men who took their stand on what was promised them. I contested the ground inch by inch; nor perhaps was this always without avail to the Emperor's interests—thanks, I am bound to state, to the Tsar of Russia and his faithfulness to the promise he gave me on the opening day and afterwards made good to us.

It was thanks to this promise that, during those final moments, we were not disappointed of our every hope.

It was this support that made it possible to salvage for the Emperor and his son, and for the Empress too, the independence and the income for a tolerable existence which at the last

moment and in spite of prior commitments, there was every intention of snatching from him, or of greatly curtailing at the very least.[1]

Marshal Ney, who had felt called upon to declare for the Restoration from the start, had confined himself to the defence of national questions, in so far as we had been allowed to discuss them. He had withdrawn from defence of the Emperor's personal and family interests, at any rate, and took no part in anything beyond the formal conferences. The Duke of Taranto lamented with me over our isolated position and the slight promise of success it held for our *démarches*.

[1] A parallel passage from the duke's report to the Emperor of progress during that day (*Archives de Caulaincourt*, file 13; draft):

April 10.—Sire, I hope to inform Your Majesty to-night that everything has been signed. . . .

"As to Austria, let Your Majesty be no longer deceived on that score. The fact is that Austria thinks of nothing, dreams of nothing, but her dear Italy. Elba and Parma, so it seems to her, have been promised you at her expense. In view of that, judge, Sire, how well disposed the Empress will find her father and Metternich to Her Majesty's receiving Tuscany. I grieve to think that it is to this hope that Your Majesty has sacrificed the happiness of being reunited with your wife and son. If only the interview which you have desired may give you no cause for yet more sorrow!

"In what I have the honour of reporting to Your Majesty there is neither infatuation with the Tsar Alexander, as you sometimes believe, nor provocation with Austria, regardless of how much less hostile she might have been. I am, alas, but the echo of those sad truths which redouble my despair when I see Your Majesty the dupe of your own confidence in your father-in-law's feelings; and that, too, at the moment when there is not the least willingness to allow anything on the score of the enormous sacrifice you have made, by your abdication, for the peace of France and of the world.

"The Tsar, whom I saw yesterday and whose presence I left a moment ago, did not tell me a word of what has lately happened. I had to show an equal reserve, both because the interest I represent forbade me to admit the possibility of any such breach of faith, and because I must protect my sources of information. But, being certain of the facts, my knowledge of his character leads me to interpret his reserve as proof positive that he will keep his word. He takes it as an obligation, a matter of conscience—which ought to reassure you completely."

The Provisional Government had raised difficulties of every kind about the Extraordinary Domain, the Crown diamonds, and even about the Private Domain, which came to approximately two hundred millions, increment of the Emperor's savings from the civil list—funds invested with the State. They went so far as to ask for whatever sums the Emperor might have in his possession. Their demands knew no limit, and, while the Allies were negotiating with us, the Provisional Government had M. Dudon, the auditor, carry off to Orléans the private exchequer that was convoyed about with Her Majesty the Regent.[1] Some twelve or fifteen millions were taken, never to be heard of more.[2] There has

[1] On April 8, the Provisional Government had decided to send a Treasury agent to La Bouillerie, high treasurer to the Crown, who had followed Marie Louise to Blois, taking the Exchequer with him. The agent was to order La Bouillerie to return whatever cash funds he had. Baron Louis, Acting-Commissioner of Finance, had appointed as agent Baron Jean-François Dudon, "erstwhile secretary of requests to the Council of State and paymaster in Spain, cashiered the year before, and put in gaol at Vincennes for some days besides, for deserting his post in face of the enemy." On the 9th, moreover, the Provisional Government issued a decree ordering "every depositary or holder of funds removed from Paris" to see to it that they were turned back into the Treasury. Armed with that decree, Dudon reached Orléans on the 10th. At first he could not break through the resistance of La Bouillerie, General Cafarelli, and Champagny, but on the morning of the 12th an officer of the *gendarmerie d'élite*, Baron Janin, commanding the Empress's escort, ordered horses put to the caissons and started them off for Paris under guard of his detachment. The booty included the Empress's personal diamonds mixed in with those belonging to the Crown, and frs. 11,500,000 in gold coin and frs. 3 millions in silver plate, plus sundry items belonging to the Emperor personally. Cf. Masson, *L'Affaire Maubreuil*, 107.

[2] Concerning the disappearance of those funds, which remained for two or three days in the courtyard of the Tuileries without being unloaded, see Pasquier, *Mémoires*, II, 336; Masson, *L'Affaire Maubreuil*, 121; Peyrusse, *Mémorial et Archives*, 309; and the *Mémorial de Saintes-Hélène*, IV, 135. In 1815, during the Hundred Days, Napoleon ordered an inquiry conducted. Nothing came of it, and, in the words of Peyrusse, "*Il fallut se résigner à rien savoir.*"

been a rumour that the foreign ministers had their share of it; I repeat this *on dit*, but have no opinion in the matter. The Empress saved five millions out of the exchequer, I believe, and she had that sum by her. Two of those millions were sent to the Emperor, a little at a time; and it was with this that he paid his Household until the time of his departure, and made his journey, and defrayed all the expenses of his establishment. For the cash in the Treasury, which was at Fontainebleau, had been all but expended in advances made to meet the pay of the Guard, and still went to provide for that even at the last moments.

It may be remarked that Dudon carried off the exchequer while the treaty was being signed with us. This gives a fair idea of the Provisional Government's sense of decent restraint, and also of how much respect the Allies had for their own word, when, in a manner wholly unprecedented, they could allow the violation of the state of armistice then existing and guaranteed by mutual agreement. In the belief that something had been overlooked, the Empress's very carriages were pillaged as she was travelling with them to Rambouillet.[1] What none had dared to do when we were at the mercy of Russians and Prussians (who would have had just grievances to avenge), one dared to do when the Empress's father was in Paris. The lure of pelf and pillage was such—and so strong, no doubt, was the assurance of impunity given by those who were in honour bound to command respect for Cæsar's wife in the person of the daughter of the Cæsars—that all decency was outraged. Things reached such a point that Count Shuvalov, who was with Her Majesty, and whose assiduity and courtesy never flagged for an instant, sent an aide-de-camp to the rescue of that part of the *cortège*. It was convoyed by Cossacks, who, paralyzed by the presence of officers and by

[1] On April 9, during the Empress's journey from Blois to Orléans, the carriages bringing up her train were halted at Beaugency and looted by Cossacks. When Shuvalov intervened, however, everything was returned, if one is to believe Méneval (*Napoléon et Marie-Louise*, II, 74). Be it noted that despite what Caulaincourt says about it, that incident took place prior to Dudon's expedition to Orléans.

orders from their superiors, put up no defence until Shuvalov's aide came to drive off those licensed looters. Very little was salvaged. The Empress had preserved only a table-service for twenty-five; the balance of the silver-ware, and likewise the silver-gilt, was carried away by Dudon along with the exchequer, so I heard.

The accounting which La Bouillerie has had to render since then will furnish proof of the admirable order which prevailed in all departments of administration of the civil list, and of how the Emperor used it for the national good instead of handing it out to those who were accused of having had their share of a portion of those spoils. The Government has been able to assure itself that there was no diversion of funds, and that the men who headed the various departments of the Emperor's Household, far from having millions, as many persons would like to believe, never even received any perquisites and drew only modest salaries, considering the posts they held. True enough, they had considerable endowments and a revenue, for the last two years, of fifty to a hundred thousand francs allotted to the office they were assigned to; but the whole of that is the merest trifle if one compares it to the emoluments of the same posts before the Revolution, and to the exorbitant expenditures they were forced to make on account of the continual moving about and the compulsory lavish display. Besides, the Restoration took everyone unawares; and all those great functionaries found themselves with but little wealth and even, one may say, in straitened circumstances.

I return to my difficulties over the treaty-clauses relative to what the Emperor could keep or claim. As for the diamonds, the Emperor himself had told me that he laid no claim to them; he had had them registered at the Senate as State property. Consequently, he authorized me to pledge myself for their return. They were hidden; some of them were outside Paris, which fact made trouble. However, when I assumed personal responsibility for returning them, my word of honour was considered sufficient; the conclusion of the treaty was not postponed.

The Emperor had promised to tell me who the custodians were, should that prove indispensable. The diamonds, then, were all turned in to Baron de la Bouillerie, who gave receipt for them.[1] As for the Extraordinary and the Private Domains, the heads of those departments were ordered to appear in Paris for an accounting with the new government. Our agreement to surrender everything intact was sufficient. In that respect, the Emperor went beyond what could be demanded of him, for he gave up even the increment of savings from his privy purse and his civil list.

In every legation they were busily making fair copies of the treaty, so that it might be signed at the conference set for 3 p.m. [April 10], in the Tsar's salon at Talleyrand's. For

[1] In the matter of the Crown diamonds, there remains (*Archives de Caulaincourt*, file 13) Napoleon's signed letter instructing his plenipotentiary to procure receipt in full for the surrender of those which were concealed outside Paris. The original inventory is as follows:

IN CHEST No. 2.—*Jewels for the use of H.M. the Emperor and King.*

Shoulder-belt—Hatband—Shoulder-knot—Set of dress buttons, comprising 25 large and 25 small—Pair of shoe-buckles—Pair of garter-buckles—Grand Collar of the Order of the Legion of Honour—Plaque of said order—Grand Star of said order—Gold Star of said order—Plaque of the Order of the Iron Crown—Golden insignia of said order.

IN CHEST No. 3.—*Jewels for the use of H.M. the Empress.*

Closed crown of pearls—Diamond ornament—Crown—Diadem—Collar—Comb—Ear-rings known as girandoles—Bracelets.

Diamonds, pearls, and unset stones.

1. Unset diamonds and Order of the United Netherlands listed in *entry i* of the general inventory of May 15, 1813;
2. Unset pearls, *entry iv* of said inventory;
3. Coloured stones, unset, *entry vi* of said inventory;
4. Sixteen rubies, supplement to general inventory, *entry vi*, p. 122;
5. Two rose-diamonds, second supplement, *entry i*, p. 141;
6. Diamonds and pearls pertaining to the Extraordinary Domain as listed by inventory of April 2, 1812.

It has been impossible as yet to identify the depositaries to whom Caulaincourt alludes. But clearly chests 2 and 3 had not been entrusted to Joseph Bonaparte, as Roustam says in his *Mémoires*; nor had they been turned over, along with chest 1, to Dudon at Orléans, as Masson surmises in *L'Affaire Maubreuil*.

our proviso had always been that we would not go to the Provisional Government's sitting (as it was insinuated that we should do) until after such time as the treaty had been signed by all the Powers. Once that was agreed on, Nesselrode had written me officially, at last, to tell me that the exchange of the Emperor's abdication in return for the Provisional Government's assent to the treaty of peace would take place, at a session of the said Government, immediately after the conference appointed for the signing with the Ministers of the Powers. The Provisional Government had tried its utmost to refuse the giving of its assent. Its grounds were that such procedure was useless and superfluous; that the Allies, as signatories of the treaty with the Emperor Napoleon, were guarantors of all the stipulations of that act, in which we, by still refusing to recognize the Provisional Government, were unwilling that it should intervene as a power. Since, however, the Sovereigns had promised us that assent and the French Government's every guaranty besides, we stood our ground. I carried my insistence to the Tsar, to whom I pointed out that once he himself was in Petersburg the Emperor would be without titles or any real protection, and that accordingly it was indispensable to procure the Provisional Government's assent to those articles which were to be binding upon France. He agreed with my arguments, and the Allies supported us in this demand. Perceiving how important it would be to have the Royal Government also as accessory, once it was established and organized, I likewise procured the formal promise of the Allies, and of the Tsar in particular, to that effect. That, however, could only be accomplished later on, after the ratification. It was otherwise beside the question for the time being.

Before resuming the account of our negotiations, the sequence of dates compels me to revert to what happened in regard to the Empress.

The Emperor had enjoined her to arrange an interview with her father at Rambouillet, or in some other place if he preferred. Metternich, with whom he negotiated this directly, informed me, when I saw him on the 10th, that he

was going to send Princes Paul Esterhazy and Liechtenstein to her to announce the impending arrival of the Emperor of Austria, and invite her to proceed to Rambouillet if it were agreeable to the Emperor Napoleon. Even though he had left me in ignorance of whatever instructions he had issued in this regard, I felt bound to give him an immediate report of these particulars. The Emperor replied on the 11th, as he had told me previously, that the Empress was going to her father to ask him for Tuscany. That, I repeat, was the Emperor's pet project—the cherished dream for which he sacrificed the happiness of having his wife and son beside him. The Empress, according to the information I had, showed some reluctance to take up permanent residence at Elba, but none whatever about going there. Her distaste for that island, so I afterwards learned from an unimpeachable source, hinged solely upon the idea that the Emperor's family, certain members of which were objectionable to her, would go there likewise. She believed she had several causes of complaint against his family; and quite possibly there were grounds for her belief. The behaviour of the Emperor's brothers at Blois had left something to be desired. Prince J[oseph] had not shown proper restraint at Paris some time before. Something of this had got back to the Emperor, who was outraged by it; but the grave state of affairs and the necessity of handling his brothers with circumspection, even in a matter which so cruelly wounded him, had forced him to pretend ignorance and to overlook what he was then unable to punish. The Empress was afraid (why, I do not know) of what she called the Princess Pauline's intrigues. As for the Emperor, she always showed herself most tenderly affectionate towards him. She grieved for him, and she felt far more concerned for him than for herself over the catastrophe that toppled him from the world's highest throne.

All these matters were discussed frankly, as between man and wife. "I am not willing for Louise to shut herself up on this Island of Elba," he said to me. "It must be possible for her to live in fair Italy a large part of the year; she will then come back more gladly to make my acquaintance. I

can resign myself to living off in a corner of the world: a soldier makes the best of anything. But I want Marie Louise to enjoy at least what little pleasure the Continent more readily affords, and I want a decent living put by for her." The Emperor felt loving concern for the Empress and his son; his feelings were all for them. But whether because his plan to end his life made him indifferent to everything that concerned him alone, or because, through total resignation, his impassivity had kept pace with his misfortunes, or because some hidden instinct led him to trust that the future would better what to-day he was powerless to change—for whatever reason, he was like a rock the storms break over, so far as his own interests were concerned. Far from attempting to constrain the Empress, he did not so much as try to influence her choice. It was at that time—and here is a remarkable thing—that he sent me word that the Empress was disposed to go into retirement with him in England, not wishing her lot to be other than his own. This, no doubt, was an idea that had been put into her head by the Emperor, who had mentioned it to me, during our last conversation at Fontainebleau, as one of the alternatives open to him; as the one that perhaps had the most to offer in the way of peace and comfort, since, so he told me, there was no country, France excepted, that had so much to give him in the way of good society, the arts, the sciences, and above all, good conversation with men of parts—this last a prime consideration with him, since he intended to live a private life and take no further part in world affairs. For some days past, in fact, his attention had been riveted upon what he considered so hospitable a land. He thought that that kingly race, whose most inveterate enemy he had been, would pride itself on being the most generous of foes, and that a great man's trust in it would be most flattering to the government of a nation whose institutions were the most liberal of any in Europe.

I revert to the treaty. At the last minute we were told that the press of affairs had forced the postponement until 9 p.m. of the conference set for three o'clock. Wherefore we were requested to turn over the Instrument of Abdication

to the Provisional Government in advance of the fact, in order, so it was alleged, to hasten proceedings. This meant, in so many words, that our affair was being hurried forward, and, in view of the pressure that had been brought to bear on me, I took up this question with my colleagues. We refused to consider it, giving as our reason Nesselrode's understanding with me, and the letter in which I had made him put in writing the procedure that was to be followed. Any other procedure divested me of our security before a single guaranty was given in exchange; on my own account I would never have consented to it. The evening session led to fresh discussion over certain clauses, even though all had been gone over and over and thrashed out beforehand in the minutest detail. The very first words brought up a difficulty which I had foreseen from the way in which Lord Castlereagh had expressed himself to me at all times, though doubtless he had not yet spoken to the Allies in that sense. He demanded that Great Britain should not be named in the treaty as a contracting party. Nobody objected. Since his assent to the treaty served our purpose just as well, I confined myself to demanding that a protocol of the conference be drawn up so as to make his assent of record. That being allowed, the proceedings continued. The plenipotentiaries were doubtless so accustomed to taking the suggestions of that Cabinet that there was not even the slightest protest over the lack of consideration it had shown by waiting until the last moment to inform its allies of its decision. His Britannic Majesty had to be struck out of all the protocols.

Lord Castlereagh bound himself, as just announced, to give his Government's stated accession to the treaty in the form of a declaration attached to the protocol, invoking the principle that England binds herself only in respect of her own actions, and that she will not put herself in a position to be compromised by the acts of a third party. In principle, that is doubtless very wise; but there are personal usages of this sort as to which it is possible to declare oneself in advance of their application to affairs.

We had every reason to suppose that the articles of the treaty would be subjected merely to a formal reading; that all the provisos were as good as settled, in view of their lengthy discussion with and amongst the Allies, and of their initialling by the minister who had negotiated with us as the Allied representative. But it turned out far otherwise. Whatever they had been unable to snatch from us through the agency of the Russian Minister because of his master's promises to us, the assembled coalition now deprived us of. Every article was drawn up anew, and we were obliged to submit to all that was decreed by force. Protesting the while, we were compelled nonetheless to subscribe to the exorbitance of the powerful, in order to salvage what we could for those whose power was no more.[1]

Under Article 2, the words "during their lifetime" were substituted instead of "wherever they may be." "The prince their son" was stricken out; he was included only in the general designation of "princes of the Emperor's family."[2]

Under Article 3, though only with great difficulty and after long and heated arguments, I procured the reversion to the Empress of one of the two millions allowed yearly to the Emperor.

In Article 4, the wording was somewhat changed without altering the sense.

Article 5 was rewritten: after some difficulty I obtained the insertion of the word "sovereignty" for the Empress and her son.[3]

[1] The original articles, initialled by Napoleon's plenipotentiaries, Nesselrode and Metternich, are preserved in the Caulaincourt *Archives*. They verify the Duke of Vicenza's text at all points.

[2] This clause dealt with the retention of dynastic titles by the Bonapartes.

[3] ARTICLE 5.—"The Duchies of Parma, Piacenza, and Guastalla shall be given in full possession *and sovereignty* to H.M. the Empress Marie Louise. They shall devolve to her son and to his direct issue. The prince, her son, shall take as of this present the title of Prince of Parma, Piacenza, and Guastalla."

Under Article 8, I could not prevent the excision of the words "to be possessed in full sovereignty" with reference to the establishment guaranteed to the Viceroy.

Under Article 9, they struck out the two millions that the Empress Marie Louise had been promised from the Emperor's invested funds.

Under Article 18, I was put to it to obtain the three years' grace granted for the re-entry into France of persons who accompanied the Emperor.

Bitter disputes arose over several points, and in this connexion Marshal Ney engaged in an ill-timed quarrel with Macdonald and in a number of altercations with me, all of which did him no good in the opinion of his hearers. According to him, we were defending to excess the rights and personal interests for which we stood proxy. He expressed himself on this whole subject in a manner unsuited to his position and to the circumstances; and we were repeatedly compelled to remind him that since we were united on this occasion only as attorneys for the defence, it was not for us to cast up imputations and reproof, no matter how well merited, against our principal.

Unquestionably, the Marshal-Prince of the Moskowa believed that he was serving France's good by showing his disapproval of our claims on the Emperor's behalf, and even by opposing those claims. I would pass no judgement either on Ney's behaviour or his motive; his intentions may have been praiseworthy; I restrain myself to narration. Nevertheless, as I remarked to him then, it was necessary that he should resign as the Emperor's plenipotentiary if he would claim the right of censuring him; for we were there as the Emperor's advocates, and could in nowise act as his judges. The foreign ministers apparently found small edification in this behaviour, and for us the contrast was painful between it and the high renown which that marshal so often had won. It is with regret that I write these lines; for the man who brought his corps through at Krasnoë will forever be the hero of the armies of France.

At length, in spite of the cross-purposes between ourselves

and the foreign ministers, the articles were adopted and initialled separately. They were then turned over to me for the drawing up of the treaty in its final form.

After the signing of the protocol, redrafted at my demand to state that the British Minister's declaration constituted part of the treaty, we went downstairs to Talleyrand's, where the Provisional Government was assembled and waiting for us.[1]

Fouché, Count Dessolle, and the chief functionaries who headed the various departments of the administration were all gathered together there. We were invited to sit down. The Prince of Benevento handed me the Provisional Government's assent to the treaty which we had just signed, and in exchange I gave him the Emperor's Instrument of Abdication.[2]

Talleyrand told us that the Government prized the support of all Frenchmen. This Act, he went on, was the gauge of peace—of that peace which France and Europe desired, and of which everyone perceived the necessity.

[1] When the Duke of Vicenza comes to this point in his narrative, his memory for some reason slips a day, leading him to condense the events of two successive evenings into one sequence. All historical texts that deal with this sequence of events are perhaps comprehensibly confused as to chronology. However, the subsequent text, together with the following memorandum (*Archives de Caulaincourt*, file 13, draft) sent to Napoleon by the duke immediately after signing the protocol, will make it clear that the session at Talleyrand's took place in the evening of April 11, and not, as Caulaincourt would lead the reader to think, at midnight of the 10th:

"*April* 10, *midnight*.—Sire, the protocol and the signed articles came into my hands a few moments ago. From the house where I also have had to sign this cruel decree, I have the honour to send Your Majesty word of it, so as not to lose a moment. The question of the changes projected by a faction of the Allies (*i.e.* of refusing to let Napoleon have Elba) did not arise.

"The definitive copy will doubtless be completed to-morrow evening, and Your Majesty's declaration exchanged in the fashion prescribed to me when I left.

[2] This Act is published, following the *Bulletin des lois*, in the *Correspondance de Napoléon*, 21558.

Wherefore the Provisional Government set store by our presence in its midst. Since our example could not fail to have a salutary influence upon the army, he was happy to think that this, our final act of devotion to interests which no longer were the interests of France, would be followed by our acceptance of the course which events had lately taken, and which assured France's tranquillity and happiness in the future. Then, because I had spoken for the others and had delivered the abdication, he addressed me as chief plenipotentiary and demanded my adherence

I replied that I was the Emperor Napoleon's plenipotentiary; that, bound by my oath and even more by his misfortune, I would remain his loyal and devoted subject as long as his affairs were unsettled and he might still have need of my services. I added that I was requesting passports in order to rejoin him at Fontainebleau. Marshal Ney declared that he had given his adherence some days ago; the Provisional Government knew that he was at its command; he already had announced that he would go to Fontainebleau no more.[1] The Duke of Taranto's answer was that he thought and would do the same as the Duke of Vicenza. He and I then rose together to leave the assembly and wait in another room for the writing out of our passports, without which formality it was impossible to get out of Paris. They were delivered to us without delay.

What I felt during the conference with the Allied Ministers, but more especially afterwards, upon delivering the abdication to the Provisional Government and being present in the midst of that reunion, will never leave my thoughts. No one, unless he should walk to his own execution, can imagine what that experience was like.

[1] "M. de Talleyrand came over to us and said: 'Now that everything has been completed, we require your adherence, gentlemen, to the new social order.' Marshal Ney made haste to reply that he had already given his. I replied simply that I refused to do so; Caulaincourt said the same. Talleyrand could not change colour nor turn pale, but his face swelled up as if it were suffused with anger and about to burst" (Macdonald, *Souvenirs*, 298.)

To crown my woe, there remained the necessity of reporting this tragic outcome to the Emperor. What details there were to give him! What a day! What a night! My reflexions increased my misery still more. Perhaps the great man who was self-deluded only yesterday . . . perhaps, while we were subscribing to his sentence, he was still deluding himself over his resources and his power. This idea crushed me. Abandoned by his father-in-law, as he had been deserted by his courtiers, by Fortune, and in part by France: to how many sad reflexions did this situation not give rise? The Emperor Napoleon who had put Anarchy in chains, who had established for France the finest institutions and the best administration in Europe, who had spread the glory of the French name through virtually every quarter of the globe, who had established our credit, founded our industries, called into being so many private fortunes, so much individual wealth; he, against whom his country could doubtless level many a just reproach, but to whom, when all was said, she was indebted for so much glory and the seeds of such prosperity; he who called her first of all by her title as Great Nation of Europe, now by this same nation abandoned, exiled from her soil, and all but exiled from that continent resounding with his immortal fame! These reflexions overwhelmed me; I was alive to every emotion that must be his. I seemed to hear his final words to me, spoken as I was leaving him at Fontainebleau: "What need have I to dictate instructions, now that I can no longer stipulate for the interests of France? What do I care what will be done with me; it takes no great room to bury a soldier."

What a destiny! What a spectacle for a Frenchman: to behold this ruler of kings, who not a year ago could still be the arbiter of Europe—this man of whom the world and France made for a time almost a demigod—reduced to indebtedness, for such slight consideration as he still could hope for, to the magnanimity of a foreign prince . . . !

We sent the Emperor word that all was finished, and that only certain matters of form remained to be attended to.[1]

[1]Cf. Caulaincourt's report to Napoleon, page 304, note 1.

But on the morning of the 11th, when the copies were nearly done, a difficulty arose which the Allies had not foreseen: How to classify all the Sovereigns in the treaty under the protocol? To get around this embarrassment, it was agreed that we should sign a separate treaty with every Power—which meant starting all over again. I hastened to advise the Emperor of this, so that he would not be surprised at our delay; and at the same time I enjoined him to send orders to Blois for the requisite ministers to come to Paris to fulfil the agreements which I had had to make personally, and thus relieve the difficulties I was having in regard to the Extraordinary Domain, the Exchequer, the Crown diamonds, and various other objects.

During that interim, Messieurs Bausset and Saint-Aulaire, despatched by the Empress with letters for her father, had respectively arrived in Paris the evening before and during the night; I only chanced to learn of their journey and its purpose. Alas! if one may trust what was said amongst the foreigners, Bausset's language must have been far different from what that unhappy princess no doubt authorized her emissaries to say, and what his duty to the Emperor prescribed.[1] According to the word that went round in consequence of this mission, it is impossible to doubt that the plan to prevent the Empress from rejoining her husband was already settled. Those who are unfortunate no longer have friends—and not a faithful servant, if they are princes. Those gentlemen were sent on to Rambouillet by Metternich.

In order to cut short the delays caused by having to draw up fresh copies, some of which could not be made out in all due form until the morning of the 12th, the Tsar of Russia was so good as to grant my request that he would send his own ratification to Fontainebleau that very day, so that the Emperor would not be left in the slightest uncertainty over the complete, faithful carrying out of every stipulation.

[1] Cf. Bausset, *Mémoires*, II, 289.

At Fontainebleau: Napoleon Attempts Suicide

THE Duke of Taranto and I reached Fontainebleau during the afternoon.[1] Everyone looked heartily pleased. The Emperor gave us a very good reception and appeared even to be content with our services, for he let us see how he felt. "Where is Ney?" he asked us; and we replied: "He was not able to come along just now."—"Ah! . . ." His Majesty resumed the conversation; he seemed astonished that we had failed to carry our point concerning Tuscany. What hurt him most, apparently, was the predicament in which the Emperor of Austria had left his daughter and his grandson.

[1] April 12.—The plenipotentiaries left Paris in the late morning, for Macdonald (*Souvenirs*, 298) says: "The Count of Artois was at that moment entering Paris, I believe." The Duke of Vicenza had sent the following letter ahead of them; the original is preserved in his *Archives*, file 13:

"*April* 12, *one o'clock in the morning.*—Sire, copies of the treaty signed in due form, are in my hands, together with the Provisional Government's acceptance just received. Your Majesty will find a copy of the same attached hereto, and also of certain articles of the treaty that may interest you. Finally, I hope that the Marshal of Taranto will share with me the honour of delivering these documents to you in the course of the day, he having just now emphatically declared to the Provisional Government, which has invited both of us to subscribe to its acts and set an example of submission to the new régime, that he would not part company with me, and that he would attend upon Your Majesty. Certain formalities, which will be complied with before noon, are all that delay us. Of course, Sire, we have saved only the merest plank out of this vast wreck; but when Your Majesty learns all that has come to pass here, you will perceive that neither zeal, devotion, nor courage has been wanting for the fulfilment of your every hope. My conscience tells me, Sire, that I have done everything for Your Majesty's interest that I would have done for my own father, everything that I am bound as a loyal subject to do for you, and as a faithful minister. I am, Sire, etc. .. ."

He could not convince himself that this was so, but kept returning again and again to what, in his words, was a lack of common decency. Not a word did he say about his personal concerns. He talked to us about the Empress's position, and about the hope he still entertained that her father would treat her less severely, once he had seen her; and so we were dismissed.[1]

All were gratified because the treaty was putting an end to their suspense. This lengthy drama was drawing to its unhappy close; everybody saw what lay ahead of him, at least, and could choose the course he wished to take. With the Emperor's fate decided, everyone could make some plan for the morrow.

According to what I was told by those who saw the Emperor informally, he was resigned. He spoke even of current events with such calm detachment that one might have thought they meant nothing to him—that he was absorbed in arranging for his journey and planning his new establishment. He talked about public matters as though some other man were involved in them; and about his prospective meeting with his son and the Empress he spoke with a certainty that is an added reproach to his father-in-law's behaviour in that regard. He was not dissatisfied over the stipulations. Under such circumstances, in short—and in view of the wholesale desertion of our cause at the crucial moment when the terms had to be whipped into their final shape—our success had been greater, perhaps, than one had had reason to expect.

The Emperor did not delay to send for me. It seemed to me that the treaty suited him. His sole dread was that it would not be respected—and his misgivings on that score outran anything I could imagine. He believed that there

[1] According to Macdonald (*Souvenirs*, 299): "It was nearly six o'clock; he kept us to dinner, but put it off an hour in order to prepare the ratifications. When it was time to sit at table, he sent us word to start without him—that he felt indisposed and was going to bed. Some food was sent to him, however. Finally, he sent me word to call at nine o'clock the next morning for his ratifications."

would be but small show of good faith in carrying it out, even on the sovereigns' part. He suspected that the Provisional Government was plotting to take his life: that its agents would try to kill him *en route*. They were too sure of immunity, he felt, and far too certain of reward, to leave a stone unturned in the effort to assassinate him. Thus he saw himself being threatened all the way to Elba. . . . He asked me several times whether there would be a British commissioner to go with him. My affirmative answer seemed to gratify him—that affirmation, together with the assurance that England had given her assent to the treaty, and that she would assign a British officer to travel with him, and that Lord Castlereagh had gone so far as to offer me British vessels for his conveyance.

"The English nation," he told me, "would not tolerate a murder. In that country the ministers have to account publicly for their acts and undertakings, and even for the way in which their engagements are carried out—therefore their assent promises security. With the Provisional Government there is no security for me, nor with the Bourbons, who have wished so often to have attempts made on my life, and who have so much to gain by ridding themselves of me to-day. In my present position, I stand amidst a pack of wolves."

He spoke to me of Lord Castlereagh. I assured him that I had found the latter very firm about the action his Government would take, but yielding to the point of kindliness about whatever concerned His Majesty; that he had stated frankly what he himself could not do, but had been eager to grant whatever lay within his power. These particulars seemed to gratify the Emperor. He asked me whether I had mentioned that he would perhaps like to go into retirement in England. Here, as I have said before, was a notion which the Emperor had discussed with me once, at the outset of events. He had since written me about it; and now, because of the inconvenience and perils of a long journey across the South of France, and on account of various other circumstances, he appeared still to have that notion in mind, though

seemingly he had not worked it up into any scheme such as he would really care to carry out. I gave the Emperor an account of the conversation I had had on that subject with Lord Castlereagh, who at first, it seemed to me, had been dumbfounded by my question, and even embarrassed to find an answer. After trying to sound me as to the Emperor's intentions, Castlereagh finally had replied that a question of that sort could be taken up only through formal discussion in England, and would first of all have to be submitted to the Allies.[1] I next told the Emperor about what I had felt obliged to do in respect to this matter, once the signing of the articles had guaranteed him a sure refuge. In the belief that it would be more suitable if the Tsar of Russia heard of this idea through my disclosure rather than through some indiscretion on the British Minister's part, I had let a word concerning the notion of retirement to England slip into one of my talks with Alexander. The Tsar, however, had seemed to take no particular note of it, nor had he either rejected or approved the idea.

For the time being, the Emperor pursued this topic no further. He merely remarked to me: "The Empress prefers that arrangement. It is likely that we shall be better off in England than anywhere else, and more at ease. Since she can have no Court that is worthy of her, life as a private citizen suits her best. As for me, if I leave French soil I shall be content wherever I find good conversation—and England is full of well-informed men of parts. However, we shall have time to make up our minds, if I can resign myself to the terms that Europe is laying me under. Ah! Caulaincourt, how hard it is!"

He then spoke about the choice of commissioners. I told him how the Tsar had said, when selecting Shuvalov:

[1] See Castlereagh's letter of April 13, 1814, to Lord Liverpool as published in Dupuis, *Le Ministère de Talleyrand en* 1814, p. 253. There the British Minister says that he had felt it impossible to give any encouragement to this alternative suggestion, which, so Caulaincourt assured him, Napoleon had discussed on a number of occasions.

"I am appointing him because you are acquainted with his sense of honour and his tactfulness, and because, since he has been so fortunate as to serve the Empress to her entire satisfaction, it has struck me that those services would make his selection more pleasing to the Emperor Napoleon."[1] And so they did; and Koller's appointment was pleasing, too—although the Austrian commissioner's humble rank was a further instance of unbecoming conduct on his country's part, and was all the more shocking because the Tsar of Russia, His Majesty's real foe, had behaved far differently.[2]

The Emperor seemed to find all these particulars diverting. Yet he was lost, so it struck me, in preoccupation. This was most unnatural in him, and was the more noticeable to me because it constantly led him to forget what he had asked, or else not listen to the answer. He interrupted the conversation with frequent exclamations: "Ah! Caulaincourt, I have already lived too long. . . . Poor France . . . I am unwilling to see your shame! . . ." Following each of those exclamations, he seemed on the point of adding a few words and of telling me what oppressed him. I thought that the secret which burdened him was on the verge of slipping out, but he drove it into the back of his mind, along with his trustfulness and his sorrows; and nothing I could do to induce him to throw off the weight of his oppression was of any avail.

He noticed how moved I was by his state of mind, and he seemed touched by my emotion. "Ah! Caulaincourt, my poor fellow," he added; "what a fatality! Poor France. . . . A little more vigour, a few months more of suffering, and

[1] Shuvalov, who had been assigned to accompany the Emperor on his journey and did not leave him until Fréjus, was relieved of attendance on Marie Louise by the Austrian general Count Wroleck. The Russian left Rambouillet on April 18, and reached Fontainebleau the same day.

[2] Franz Koller (1767–1826) was Prince Schwarzenberg's chief adjutant in 1814. He went with Napoleon to Elba, and remained there for a fortnight after the debarcation.

uld have been victorious over all I oes. We should have emer ' greater ' more glorious from this brief adversity than we did from the years of our most splendid triumphs! . . . When I think of her present state—of what shameful things the invaders will subject her to—I cannot bear to live. . . ."[1]

After more than a half-hour of silence, the Emperor spoke to me about the condition of Paris and the army. He told me that two days ago when he saw that nearly all the generals were sending in word of their submission and were opening negotiations with Paris, he had proclaimed in his salon, in a loud voice, that one would do well to take service with the Bourbons—moreover, that he urged all those there present to do so, and thus make it easier for everybody. He had gone on to say that those who had struck their bargains need not dissemble with him: that dissimulation annoyed and hurt him worse than anything else.[2] "I cannot abide deceit," he added.

I spoke to the Emperor of the demand that he had had made upon me for the return of his Instrument of Abdication, and of the letter that he had written me in regard to this, after the articles were signed. There was no way whatsoever, I pointed out to him, in which I could have obeyed that order without ruining him and disgracing myself; wherefore

[1] It should be remarked here that the notion of suicide seems to have occurred to the Emperor as early as April 8. In a letter of that date, dictated to Fain for Méneval, but which did not reach the addressee at Orléans until the 10th, Napoleon instructed Méneval to be prepared for anything, "even the Emperor's death." Méneval was much alarmed by this specific reference, which he discussed with Mme. de Montebello; but the Emperor's correspondence under date of April 9 proves that this suicidal impulse, if it actually did occur to him, was brief. Cf. Méneval, *Napoléon et Marie-Louise*, II, 74, and Frédéric Masson, *L'Imperatrice Marie-Louise*, 576.

[2] See Belliard, *Mémoires*, I, 194: "Gentlemen, since I am not remaining with you, and since you are under a different government, it behoves you to join forces openly with that government and serve it as well as you have served me. I urge you, nay, I command you to do so."

there could be no question of my choice in the matter. I remarked that of course I had regretted my inability to oblige him, but that there were some sacrifices which no man of his word could make, even through force of feeling or at his Sovereign's command. He told me that he had understood my motives.

"I approve of you," he went on; "you acted properly. I did not know how things stood at the time. I was given to think that the Guard was unwilling to surrender, and that most of the troops felt the same way. Therefore I was able to count on something from my forces in the Midi, and on their joining up with my army in Italy—for I would never have been willing to devastate France with internal strife. If everybody had not struck his own bargain and deserted me, I should have snatched Italy from the clutches of Austria: those gallant Italians would have welcomed me with open arms. What difference could it make to Their Majesties if Austria did without Italy? My presence in that country would have braced its whole morale; I should have thrown open its ports to the British—and there I would have had a fine kingdom which would not have frightened a soul. If the course of events and the wrath of Europe had prevented my setting up that State for my own, at least I could have kept it for my son, whose rights over Italy I meant to retain in my abdication. There you have the change that I intended to make in it."

I remarked to him that, since he would thus have been shifting the grounds on which one had consented to negotiate, it was plain that all negotiating would then have ceased. I added that his position was far different, at the time that notion struck him, from what it had been on ,[1] when our parleying began. It would have been much simpler, I told him, to order me to break off negotiations, if that was what he had had in mind; for we should not have had far to seek for an excuse, and at least the trick could then have been turned above board. He agreed, but went on to say that, in view of what sundry persons had told him during the past

[1] The manuscript leaves this date blank.

few days, he had hoped to escape, through that shift of position, from the harshest necessity of all. It had taken him a long while, said he, to become convinced that Austria would make any such sacrifice of her own best interests and the claims of her Royal Blood. Only at the very last moment had he gained a clear view of the craven manner in which he had been forsaken; not till then had he seen the full necessity of bowing to the terms prescribed to him. Ney's utter betrayal of him had come to his knowledge only two days ago. He had foreseen, finally, that it was bound to happen; but Ney's stupidity might have cost him still more, had he kept him with the troops. He added, "Oudinot is a mate to him—a featherbrain. They are heroes in the field; but otherwise their ambition, their dread of coming late to the distribution of honours and wealth, is enough to make them repudiate their own fathers."

The Emperor asked me whether it was true, as he had been told, that Marshal Ney had gone over neck and crop to the Provisional Government. My answer was that the report was too strong; that all these particulars were pointless now, in any case; and that when there was a revolution in progress, one's very love of Emperor and country might find new ways of expression. The Emperor, it appeared to me, was convinced that Ney had treated him shabbily. "You can tell me the truth," he added, "for I understand him. Yesterday he was against me—and he will lay down his life for me to-morrow. Be that as it may, I know for certain how he behaved at Talleyrand's a few days ago. He spoke in front of so many people that what he said is common knowledge; even Fouché, who is unwilling that they should give me Elba, could not help remarking to somebody that I must have sent Ney to Paris out of spite to myself. That fellow Fouché is above suspicion of goodwill towards me. If what they tell me is true, he is one of the men who are most outspoken against giving me Elba, because it is too near at hand. He is afraid of me, and would like to see me at the world's end, I should imagine—such is the load of treason on his

conscience.[1] Even so, he is scornful of Talleyrand's revolution, and perceives clearly what mischief it will do to France."

The Emperor asked me if I had seen Fouché. I replied that I had caught sight of him only yesterday at the session of the Provisional Government, when I was delivering the abdication. "I am positive of what I tell you about him," His Majesty repeated; and then he mentioned the Empress. "She will not wish to live at Elba the year round, but she will come and go."

Involuntarily, as it were, he broke into heavy sighs when speaking of Her Majesty and his son; and he was constantly letting slip some sorrowful exclamation or other about France's predicament. "I cannot bear to live!" That exclamation in particular recurred so often—it seemed uttered so much of its own accord, and despite the efforts I saw him make to still his sorrow—that I was startled as much as I was affected by it.

As one may imagine, the tone of the conversation was not merely earnest. It was very affectionate; and for the first time since I had had the privilege of close association with the Emperor the discussion was amicable, even considerate. I was heartbroken to see the state he was in. Try as I would to control myself and so prevent his breaking down, my heart was too full. We thus found ourselves so disposed towards each other that he was about to tell me everything, whilst I was proving to him that I was too good a friend—if I may venture the expression—not to sympathize with all his misery and to deserve his entire trust. Just then, however, somebody interrupted us to announce the arrival of M. Orloff, the Tsar's aide-de-camp, bearing the ratifications.[2] The Emperor

[1] Fouché, on reaching Paris, April 8, from Italy, had plunged straight into all the conspiracies against Napoleon. On April 23, 1814, he wrote a letter to Napoleon, declaring that the Emperor's presence on the Island of Elba was both unseemly and impossible. This letter was published in the *Moniteur* in August, 1815. Cf. Louis Madelin, *Fouché*, II, 302 and 305.

[2] "One of the Tsar of Russia's aides-de-camp arrived before, during, or after dinner—I forget just when. He was bearer of the ratified treaty which his master sent Napoleon out of courtesy. . . .

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seemed badly provoked at this intrusion. "Leave us alone," he answered; and then, addressing himself to me: "He will wait; these gentry here will see him cared for. . . ." Then, after a momentary silence: "What is the good of these ratifications—seeing that neither France nor my son will reap the reward of my sacrifice? . . ."

This comment seemed the preamble to what he was impelled to tell me. He checked himself abruptly, however, and quickened the pace with which he had been walking throughout our discussion. After a silent five minutes, he added, "My dear Caulaincourt, go and see what he wants. Get through with this business, and come back so that we may talk."

I found M. Orloff with the Prince of Neuchâtel; he handed me a letter from Nesselrode.[1] The Russian was arguing with the Chief-of-Staff, from whom he demanded an order, over the Emperor's signature, compelling the commandants of all fortified places to surrender them immediately to the Allies. The latter, who had not bethought themselves of this idea at the outset, were of the opinion now, since the treaty had been signed, that here was the best way of having the strongholds thrown open to them by sundry commandants who probably would refuse to recognize any authority but the Emperor's. M. Orloff was talking down to the Prince, after the style of a conqueror who feels himself entitled

If the Duke of Vicenza writes his memoirs, he will doubtless mention it (the conversation with that envoy)." (Macdonald, *Souvenirs*, 300.)

[1] "*Paris, this* 31 *March*–12 *April* 1814.—Your Grace: General Orloff, who is to have the honour of delivering this letter to Your Excellency, is commissioned by H.M. the Tsar to exchange with you the ratifications of the treaty we signed yesterday. I beg Your Grace to be so good as to deliver to him the orders addressed to the commandants of fortresses and the generals-in-chief of armies in the field, whereby they shall be notified of the Emperor Napoleon's abdication. Your Excellency will likewise be so kind as to reach an understanding with M. Orloff about the military arrangements pertaining to his journey. I have the honour, etc.—Count de Nesselrode." (*Archives de Caulaincourt*, file 13; original.)

to command; the Prince, quite properly, was refusing to send out an order which no one had demanded, and which no one had agreed in any way to despatch. I entered the discussion and pointed out to M. Orloff that the Senate, by proclaiming the forfeiture of the throne, and the Allies, by making it obligatory, had placed the Emperor in a position where he could promise nothing in the name of France. . . . In support of what I told him, I cited a recent instance, namely: when the armistice was being negotiated and drawn up with Prince Schwarzenberg, the Generalissimo had not allowed us to insert a clause, which I myself had proposed, suspending hostilities in the fortified zones as well. He had objected that that was none of our concern, since administration now lay in the hands of the Provisional Government, which would give its own orders in that respect and would make whatever arrangements it saw fit. My inference here was that we could not be commanded to issue an order surrendering fortresses to-day, since, but a few days earlier, one had denied our right to interfere in the matter.

M. Orloff was not open to persuasion: my remarks conflicted too sharply with the orders under which he was acting. He therefore persisted in being so exigent with the Prince that the latter was about to give in, after much argument. Considering how things stood, he could see no possible harm in giving way to that wish; and so, in order to smooth everything over, he told me under his breath that he was going to issue the order in his capacity as Chief-of-Staff, thereby sparing the Emperor the pain of discussing the incident. I took offence at this renewed insistence. For my part, I told M. Orloff, I would pledge the Emperor not to give way an inch to this claim, which I knew in advance that he would not even listen to, no matter what might be the consequences. I then made as if to withdraw; for I had been offended, too, by the unseemly terms which that young officer had made use of, in the heat of his persistence, when addressing a man of the Prince of Neuchâtel's age and rank.

Nor could we praise M. Orloff's behaviour in other respects:

he would not hand over the ratifications, so he told me, unless he were given the order which it was his duty to demand. I told him that we would pass that statement by, since I was sure that now he was not fulfilling the wishes of his master the Tsar, whose word was sacred, and who, once a treaty had been agreed on, was incapable of making its performance hinge upon the refusal of something both unforeseen and unstipulated. I showed him the letter he had brought me from Count Nesselrode, and then I started to leave in earnest. Whether because that officer had orders not mentioned in Nesselrode's letter, or because he thought fit to be officious in hopes of getting on, he found it hard to stomach my reasoning. In the end, however, upon my insistence that he should declare whether or not he refused to exchange the ratifications, he gave way, protesting to me that he was compromising himself. With that we parted, and I went to my quarters to write Nesselrode an account of what had happened, thus anticipating the reports Orloff might send him.

Because of the time needed to copy the ratifications, their exchange could not take place until the next morning. I therefore left M. Orloff with the Prince of Neuchâtel, who took charge of his entertainment whilst he was waiting for the copies from the State Secretariat. The easy-going Prince of Neuchâtel was most anxious to spare the Emperor these painful details; nor could he see any harm in notifying the governors of fortresses officially about the Emperor's abdication (which already was a matter of common knowledge), and thus enabling them to take orders from the new government. By complying in effect with the Russian's demand, the Prince could avert *contretemps* and even useless fighting. Berthier could not refrain from offering M. Orloff the order, issued and signed by himself as Chief-of-Staff—a proposal which, as you may imagine, was accepted with avidity. He thereupon despatched some of his staff-officers to spread the word abroad; and Prince Schwarzenberg sent his adjutants along with them. At the same time, the Prince of Neuchâtel sent word to Paris that within forty-eight hours he would be

there.[1] When, during the evening, the Chief-of-Staff notified me that those arrangements had been made, and that M. Orloff had asked no leave to send an officer to Paris, I altered and put aside my letter to Count Nesselrode—though I still thought it advisable to explain to him what had happened, before the aide-de-camp's return, and thus ward off, by a full statement of facts, the mischief that might grow out of a bald report.

Upon returning to my quarters, I had found Roustam[2] there. He was waiting to tell me that the Emperor requested me to come to him at once. I had then made haste to draft my letter, to give orders pertaining to the ratifications in the copyists' hands, and to note down the conversation I had had with the Emperor, to whom I speedily returned.

I did not distress him with the foregoing details, which would have angered him more than anything else he underwent. (To the Prince of Neuchâtel, and to all who came near him, he kept repeating, as he did to me, that he would rather end his reign than bear the disgrace of having subscribed, in the name of France, to terms which he called humiliating. At every opportunity, following my return from Châtillon, he repeated to me that none but the Bourbons, or some monarch far different from himself, could rest

[1] Berthier to Nesselrode, Fontainebleau, April 12, 1814, 11 p.m.: "I hasten to reply to Your Excellency's letter, which was delivered to me by Count Orloff. The Emperor Napoleon having abdicated I am coming to confer with the Minister of War in devising the means of hastening the execution of the orders the Allies desire, and to give these orders the most fitting and authentic form, so as to bring the miseries of war to an end." (*Archives historiques de la Guerre*: Berthier, 1814.) This problem was not settled definitely until the agreements of April 23, 1814, between France on the one part and Russia, Austria, Great Britain, and Prussia on the other, stipulating the general cessation of hostilities.

[2] According to the Roustam Memoirs, Caulaincourt would here be mistaken about the person who brought him the order to attend the Emperor. Roustam says he was in Paris at that time, did not return to Fontainebleau until the afternoon of the 13th, and left again the 14th at one o'clock. Cf. *Mémoires inédits de Roustam*, published by Paul Cottin, *Révue rétrospective*, VIII, 145.

content with the France of Louis XIV and escape the censure of the country; that without dishonour, it was impossible for him to give up a particle of that territory which the French people had entrusted to him when they voted for the Consulate and the Empire.)

As soon as he saw me, the Emperor asked if there were any news. My reply was that the Tsar of Russia had sent in his ratification,[1] as promised, in order to put His Majesty's mind at ease concerning the faithful performance of the treaty-pledges; that the Secretariat was busy making copies, and that the formal exchange would be completed next morning.

He spoke to me again of the army's partial adherence and the Senate's craven conduct (those are his own words), and of the behaviour of Talleyrand and numerous other persons. Always, when mentioning the army, he said that the course it had followed was virtually a legitimate measure of self-defence. His comment was that all those acts of treachery, but the Senate's conduct in particular, had betrayed France and the troops, leaving them bound hand and foot and depriving him of every means with which to exact pledges safeguarding the national institutions and the army's rights.

"Talleyrand and that conspirator Dalberg," said he, "are deceiving everybody, just as they deceived the Senate. Talleyrand has restored the Age of Folly. Louis XVIII, in short, will be very fortunate in finding him at hand, for Talleyrand has a close grasp of affairs. He will be a great help to the King, too, because he knows men as well as facts—which is a matter of importance to a government that is establishing itself and succeeding me.

"The King," he continued, "is said to be witty, very Machiavellian, irresolute, cowardly like all the Bourbons, and false altogether. The Count of Artois is far more fantastic

[1] The original of this ratification, signed by Alexander, sealed with his seal, and countersigned by Nesselrode, is to be found in the Caulaincourt *Archives*, file 13. It is dated March 30, 1814 (Russian style).

than the King, but downright. The Bourbons will lose their way if they commit themselves to those who are coming back with them. Their way to safety lies through the coalition that I have established; they must follow that course if they would not be lost. The King will become the country's hero; he will live at his ease, the happiest monarch in Europe. If he favours the *émigrés*, preferring the old nobility before the new, they will walk off with everything and will plan to exploit France for the aristocracy's advantage, not the dynasty's. That will rouse factions. France will then be ungovernable for princes so weak as they. The King will do well to hold fast to the men of the Revolution whom I have employed side by side with the old nobility. They are able men, and will serve with zeal—yes, and with assiduity—because they are ambitious. It will be simple for him to make them more royalist than the Vendeans. Besides, that will give their faction pledges of security, and will set all minds at rest."

He talked of the prestige inherent in an old dynasty; of how easily it could win the support of the troops if it treated them well—if the King surrounded himself with a group of their leaders, judiciously chosen. He spoke with emotion of how magnificently the Guard had behaved. "Its faithfulness to me will prove to the King that it is composed of sound men, who can be relied on. Just the same, in his place I would not keep them as a unit. I would give many a fat pension, and such of them as were fit to render good service I would promote—meanwhile scattering them throughout the army. Thus I should make first-rate royalists of them. The Bourbons are not strong-handed enough, nor are they in a position to lead that corps if they let it stay together. The memory of me is too green."

He enjoined me to serve the Bourbons if I persisted in my unwillingness to go with him. He added that they would use me frequently in the public business; that I was well known throughout Europe; that I ought to serve the King as faithfully as I had served him. The Bourbons, he repeated, would reign in peace if they had the good sense to change

nothing but the sheets on his bed, and to give no power to the gentry who returned with them. "Cash, a few places at Court—so much and no more for the *émigrés*."

"The administration of France," he added, "must be left to you gentlemen who understand her. My hand was firm; and France will run for a long time yet on sheer momentum, thanks to the impulse I gave her. The Bourbons have far more need than I to keep step with public opinion, since, unlike me, they lack the prestige that goes with glory and with proven experience as an administrator. I have been blamed, and perhaps justly, for loving war too well: but my administration has received its due. There was no waste there, no preference shown, no respecting of persons. The books were wide open to the world. The whole machine ran like the works of a clock with nothing but a pane of glass to screen it. Everybody could see how the wheels went round—a reassuring sight. Everyone whined about conscription, but it fell on everyone alike: the titled and the rich were hit by it, just as the beggar was. The schoolmaster's son got his commission, the bricklayer's son got his chevrons, the *pauvre diable* who had distinguished himself got the riband of the Legion of Honour—and the son who had earned distinction made up for the one who was lost. If you have a hand in affairs, Caulaincourt, bear in mind that drastic changes are not popular in France. Stability in the personnel makes everything stable. I had some unsound ministers, some administrators of small talent: if I did not make them all into good ones, I at least made them more useful, by not replacing them, than some others who might perhaps have been better and more capable than they. The shifting of ministers under Louis XV and Louis XVI did more to ruin France than the stupidity and impotence of the administration did, and all its wastefulness."

Despite himself, the Emperor's feeling of depression would frequently break in upon this discourse that was exciting him; and along with it he betrayed his constant preoccupation with some idea from which I felt that he was trying to divert his mind by commenting so extraordinarily (circumstances

considered) on public affairs. "Poor France!" he exclaimed, time and time again; and then he added: "I cannot bear to live. I tried my best to die at Arcis. Not a bullet would have me. My task is done. . . . I have failed. Unheard-of misfortunes have laid my power low. Treason: fatality—they have run me on the rocks and wrecked me. I was born a soldier; retirement to civil life cannot grieve me; it will not vex me to live as a private citizen. I shall always have more than I need to supply my wants. I only regret the throne for France's sake; she needed me for two more years. Destiny ought to have spared me that long: we should have beaten England. France and the whole Continent would have reaped the reward of our sacrifices. The day will come when they will do me justice: but by then they will be under the yoke, or at least beneath the sway, of either Britain or Russia. Those who trade by sea, and whose hostility to me has been so inveterate, will miss me then; and they will miss the Continental System too, which has served in a measure to rouse Europe against me. That System will some day be recognized as the grandest of my political conceptions. Already the Continent, like France, has me to thank for developing its industries—a development whose benefits will show much clearer as time goes by. If they don't watch out, the monarchs of Europe, who to-day are united by nothing but their hatred of me, will pay as dearly as India for the preponderance that their present successes give to England. They are very short-sighted. . . ."

He said once more that he had preferred to lose his throne rather than suffer the humiliation of making a shameful peace, because within a year these same weary Frenchmen, who were finding the present war so grievous a burden to-day, would have been unable to forgive him for having ceded the Rhineland and Belgium, which were France's by right as long as Italy, Poland, Finland, and India belonged to Austria, Russia, and England. "But for the Duke of Ragusa's treachery," he continued, "I should still have great means at my disposal. The Allies were lost, cut off as they were from their reserve, and with the Parisian populace at their

back. If the country had risen the way the gallant Burgundians did, and some in other provinces, it is likely that few of the invaders would have escaped with their lives. Two years from now no one in France will dare confess to having known Marmont the Traitor. . . ." He had words of praise for the Viceroy, and spoke of him as a prince who had served him faithfully, always. "Eugène," he told me, "is the only one of my family who never has given me a single cause for dissatisfaction. His mother made me very happy: those are the sweetest recollections of my life."

He said some kind things about me: "They will not reproach you," he told me, "with having been a toady. You proved yourself sufficiently opposed to the war with Russia. If I had heeded you, Caulaincourt, we should long since have made peace. Even so, I can be blamed only for not having made it at Prague. It would have been politic to sign then; and the peace might perhaps have been honourable. As for the peace of Châtillon, I have not the slightest regret that I did not subscribe there. France cannot hold it against my memory that I agreed to anything disgraceful in her name. When I would not sign peace at Prague, then I was in the wrong. I could not believe that Austria would act so decisively. Narbonne did not believe in that Power's resolution when he returned from Vienna, nor yet when he went with you to Prague. You talked nothing but peace to me; you lived on dreams of peace alone: and I thought you gauged Austria's attitude by the measure of your desire to make me decide in favour of that peace. In days to come, France will think kindly of you for your efforts.

"I, however, shall be blamed for not agreeing to Austria's proposals: yet there would have been but a Continental peace. It would have been indecisive in settling affairs with the British. Could it have been lasting? It would have sent my stock down in the general opinion, because under it I was giving up some of my rights, trifling enough in themselves, no doubt, when set off against the advantages of peace, but belittling to me in the eyes of the nations—and after my setback in Russia. In my position it was risky. Perhaps that

peace would have cost me nothing in the way of real power. It is what people think that matters, wherefore I could not afford the risk of losing my hegemony in Europe whilst the balance of power was still unsettled between me and England. The outlay for that war was all made. I could foresee no contingency that would put such another fine big army at my disposal; I saw myself within a few days' march of the Vistula. Then, with Poland rising at my summons, I would have auxiliaries that were bound to bring Austria and Russia to terms. It struck me, therefore, that peace was merely being deferred. England was so out of funds that she had hesitated to grant subsidies at the start of the campaign. That fact would not have improved her standing when she tried to raise further credit. She would come then to the end of her rope—and I flattered myself that that campaign would settle everything. I thought, moreover, that Austria would waver for a while at least, in order not to draw foreign troops and Cossacks into her provinces at the very beginning of the campaign. I had more than a fair prospect of hurling back the Russians and Prussians, and of intimidating Austria, whom I thought less resolute than she was—or not so determined, at any rate, to hand her own territory over to Russia. Therefore I thought that a single push, one striking success, would make England sue for peace in order to save her Allies from total destruction, and to prevent me from regaining my old preponderance. The way to world peace, in sum, seemed to me much shorter through war than through the consequences of peace on the Continent.

"I was mistaken. Austria's behaviour upset all my calculations. It will be said—because one judges by results alone—that you were wise in wishing to make peace, and that I was at fault in fighting on. Just so; but my reasoning was sound. It was the logic of true statesmanship. Others saw it besides myself. I was not alone in my belief. . . . Metternich bore a hand in deceiving me. He spoke so confidently of the stand Austria had taken; he appeared so sure of himself! This war seemed to him the most natural thing in the world! He spoke so glibly, even about its most extreme consequences—

this new tone was so out of keeping with my father-in-law's nature, and with Austria's conservatism and sluggishness—that Maret and I both thought it was a put-up game; that all the spokesmen of the Viennese Cabinet were acting a charade. Schwarzenberg had begun speaking out of character immediately upon his arrival at Paris. The whole procedure was so at variance with the customary gait of Austrian politics that when Maret received your final letter from Prague he thought as I did: that what Metternich was doing was all a game to get Illyria at once."

The Emperor looked so weary, and I saw him so torn by self-conflict, that, despite my interest in this conversation, I begged him to take a little rest. He assured me that I was mistaken, that he was not yet ready for sleep, but that I might withdraw now, if there were anything I must attend to, and he would send for me to come back; he was anxious, anyhow, to re-read the treaty, and particularly those parts of it which concerned the Empress. I offered to read him those articles. He answered that he would rather glance over them himself, and dismissed me. I went to my quarters, more impressed than I can say with the Emperor's discourse.

Why this summing-up of the main events of his life? Why, I asked myself, this passing of judgement upon men and things? What, at such a time, was the point of these explanations about the motives that had guided him in instances long past? Why this political testament, so to speak, of which he seemed eager to make me the trustee or confidant? Why indeed, when I showed myself in small haste to have the explanations he was giving me (for there would be ample time, I thought, to talk of those matters), and when he ought more naturally to be wondering, at a moment like this, about the explanations of many more recent happenings, which I had so lately witnessed that as yet I had not been able to tell him of them? He appeared, however, to have no interest in anything that was going on. Such were my reflexions; and while they led me to no precise conception of the sad spectacle that I was soon to behold, they did mark me with a sort of melancholy and fill me with forebodings.

At the end of an hour, the Emperor sent for me. After several remarks of slight importance about the treaty, and more particularly about certain clauses of it to which he had wished to give a different meaning, he understood so thoroughly that the wording, as it stood, had been imposed on us, and that we could not have done better, that he said: "What use could you be to the Empress and my son, with her father and Metternich voicing their open opposition? Owning Italy addles Austria's brains. It is likely that that will some day be the destruction of her. Metternich goes on fawning over Murat to-day—but Murat will pay dear for his treachery after a while. Does he believe that a soldier like himself, more lucky and brave than competent, can possibly keep his throne when I am forced to step down from mine? I was his protector, the safeguard of all these kings: he has played the traitor to me and to France! He has found it possible to forget that he was born a Frenchman! He will be betrayed in his turn, and not a soul will pity him. Murat muddled everything last year, just as he did this: he never will make anything but blunders. He is at the bottom of our present ills. He wished to have the whole of Italy; that scheme drove him out of his head. He believes himself fit to unite and rule the Italians: he is not even competent to govern Lucca. He has betrayed his benefactor and his country; some day he will find out how the Austrians reward such good turns."

The Emperor spoke to me of the Prince of Neuchâtel, who had told him since yesterday that he intended going to Paris before His Majesty's departure. He knew that Berthier had made arrangements to leave on the morrow, and he was extremely displeased.[1] (He did not explain that Berthier had refused to follow him to Elba, even for a few months.)

"This proof of attachment," he told me, "would have cost him nothing. It would have given pleasure to me. Those who give me that proof will lose nothing by it. Who

[1] Berthier left Fontainebleau on April 13, promising to return. He did not come back.

knows what my plans are? Now that I am useless to France, do you believe I shall outlive her glory? . . ."

After a short silence, during which he seemed fearfully downcast, he complained still further about Berthier's desertion: "Who could have imagined that he would be one of the first to leave me! . . . He has his wife and children; there is a duty imposed from that quarter, too. By remaining behind, he hopes to save his fortune. They might indeed confiscate the Prince's property if he followed me—whereas Schwarzenberg will arrange matters so that he can keep it; those are important factors in his position. But for him to quit Fontainebleau before my departure—that is what wounds my feelings."

It would have been more seemly, no doubt, if the Chief-of-Staff had not forsaken the Emperor until the last moment. Before condemning him, however, justice would require us to go into a thousand-and-one details pertaining to the embarrassment and discomfort of his predicament. We must visualize him, too, in the state he was in at the time: suffering, tortured by the Emperor's unrest. For some little while His Majesty had made him uneasy, and often had alarmed him as well, by his wild projects which, so the Prince feared, might be laid at his own door. This brain-sickness of the Emperor's made Berthier actually ill. Since the Emperor, then, was desperately unhappy himself, he took no consideration of the age[1] and the physical suffering of an enfeebled man whom he had burnt out, and whose feelings he often wounded in the throes of his present temper. Now, wounded in his turn by Berthier's planning to leave him, His Majesty made no allowances for him on the score of a past filled with proofs innumerable of devotion and attachment. Such was the relationship existing between the master and the good and loyal servant—or friend, rather, since the Emperor frequently delighted to call him so—the faithful sharer of so much glory and the splendour of days gone by.

When citing proofs of the Prince's devotion, one may head the list with the courage he showed in telling the Emperor

[1] Berthier was then in his sixty-first year.

the truth; with his fearlessness in contradicting or even opposing him, if he thought the Emperor unjust or too stern. Long vigils, over-exhaustion, and lastly age itself had been telling upon the Prince of Neuchâtel's faculties for two years past; he had broken down under a serious illness, contracted during the retreat from Russia. The Emperor noticed this change in him, was sometimes very harsh with him, found fault with him loudly to his very face, and ended by calling to his assistance the Marshal-Duke of Dalmatia.[1] In thus summoning Soult, he characterized him as the most capable and talented amongst his marshals. But the reverses in Spain—Marmont's blunders, as the Emperor called them[2]—had compelled him, greatly to his regret, to detach Marshal Soult from his Staff and send him to re-establish his footing in the Peninsula.

The Emperor had stopped talking about the friend whom he mourned as lost to him. He felt in need of consolation. Naturally enough, whilst he was speaking to me of those who stood by him, he found words of praise for Count Bertrand, Grand Marshal of the Palace.[3] He extolled the Count's true

[1] Soult, recalled from Spain before Lutzen, "was not made use of, for reasons that were none too clear," says General Tournès; "he remained attached to Headquarters at first, with the virtually honorary post of chief commandant of the Imperial Guard. Then, on July 1, after the Vittoria disaster, he went to take over command of the Army of Spain." (General Tournès, *Lutzen*, 96.) Caulaincourt's text provides the solution to the problem raised by Tournès. In having Soult come up to Germany, Napoleon meant to keep him at hand to replace Berthier eventually.

[2] Marmont, appointed to command of the Army of Portugal on May 7, 1811, had been beaten by Wellington at Arapiles, July 22, 1812. Wounded in the arm and side in the course of that action, he was removed to France, did not return to Spain thereafter; and on March 12, 1813, he took command of the Sixth Corps of the Grand Army. The name of Marmont, as it occurs here, does not make sense, and can only have resulted from a *lapsus calami*. No doubt it should read "Joseph."

[3] Bertrand, Grand Marshal of the Palace since November 18, 1813, was, it will be recalled, one of the *derniers fidèles* who accompanied Napoleon not only to Elba but also to St. Helena.

nobility of feeling, and cited him as a wholly honourable man whose loyalty he relied on. "The outside," said he, "is plain and unprepossessing, but there is pith and substance inside it. I wish he were more spirited—and that his wife had less influence over him." He spoke affectionately of his aides-de-camp, and told me that he was touched by the loyalty of his whole *entourage*, despite the fact that—so he avowed—he was scarcely susceptible to emotion, and hardly knew what affection meant.

"It is doubtless a pity," he went on; "but matters of sentiment—the heartfelt emotions, so called—have no share in my organization." And in respect of this he told me, as on former occasions, that for him the heart was not the organ of sentiment; that he felt emotions only where most men experienced feelings of a different kind: nothing in the heart, everything in the loins and in another place, which I leave nameless. He told me, moreover, that those emotions of his were never very strong; that they betrayed themselves only through a sort of painful tingling, a nervous irritability, such as other people felt when they experienced the sickly foreboding that someone was about to do them harm: "The squeaking of a saw sometimes gives me the same sensation."

The Emperor went on with his review of personalities. It led him once again to mention Paris, where the list of actors in the great drama was growing longer each day. He plied me with a variety of questions about what had happened and who was there. I avoided answering them.

The Emperor seemed deep in preoccupation throughout: I frequently observed a change in his tone of voice. He continued to treat me in an affectionate manner, talked with me about my personal position and my finances, and expressed regret over having done nothing for me that I could hope to save from the crash: "For Talleyrand," said he, "who has turned France over to Alexander, will not lift a finger to salvage the endowments. The generals, the Senators who have been so hot to betray me, will be overreached in fine style when they find out what a treaty the foe imposes.

Metternich and the Prussians will be keen to take back all the surrendered estates. Alexander is not interested in plundering you—but he will give a free hand to his allies, so that he may have their leave to trim up Poland as he pleases. I have given you endowments in Hanover and Prussia. You will lose everything," the Emperor told me. "If it is not beneath you, would you care to have something out of the two millions they promise me? Would you like half of it?" I report the Emperor's words, to which I replied with refusal and thanks for his concern.

Returning thereupon to the Bourbons, he urged me anew to take service with them and participate in public affairs. I thanked him for his kind interest, but replied that I had been too much to the fore in his service—and especially at the present time—to make it possible for a new government to think me devoted to its welfare; common sense warned me to stand aside, since, though the rising government might perhaps believe in my honourable intentions, the upstarts who surrounded it would distrust me nonetheless. My position had been too lofty, I added, for me to become the willing butt of petty jealousy: wherefore, since I lacked ambition, I would choose to live quietly in rural retirement. Nor was it possible for me, I told him, to shift affections and beliefs as valets change masters.

The Emperor argued the point with me, saying: "You are in the wrong; the very beginning is the time for reconciliation with the government. I have bidden my whole following to serve the Bourbons faithfully. It is an obligation: perform it. If my Ministers had come to see me, as I had a right to expect,[1] I should have charged them in the same sense." And from that he launched into praise of the Duke of Gaeta, who, said he, had done great service to France through his

[1] The Duke of Bassano was the only one of the Ministers, except Caulaincourt, who was with the Emperor. The Ministers of the Interior (Montalivet) and War (Clarke), who had accompanied Marie Louise to Blois, left her on April 8 and returned to Paris without passing through Fontainebleau.

clear understanding of financial matters and his rigid honesty.[1] He praised Count Mollien for the same reasons, and added that Mollien had reduced the administration of public funds and accounts to the simplest and most accurate procedure possible; that since he had had Mollien in the Treasury, he had known France's financial condition from week to week as a banker knows the state of his cash-box and his bills and acceptances.[2]

"Decrès,"[3] he said, "is universally disliked, but people are mistaken; he has done great things for the navy. He is extremely competent, level-headed, and a foe to all malfeasance of the sort that has crept into that arm of the service. He has tried to correct those abuses. He is rude, though, and sharp-spoken—whence his unpopularity. But people will be astonished when they learn the quality of my fleet and navy stores. They will then give Decrès all the more credit because we have had every conceivable obstacle to overcome; because we were cut off from the sea and the customary sources of supply. My equipment is superior to the British. I leave France more than double the number of men-of-war she had on my return from Egypt. I have a hundred and two ships of the line—three-deckers, many of them—and frigates and other vessels in proportionate numbers. People will be astounded at what I have done to exalt the glory of the name of France. Posterity will not wish to believe what a few years of sound administration have been able to accomplish, though handicapped by disastrous wars. It cost me dear to do it. Take it all together, though; make due allowance for the fact that the navy has wasted much but returned still more, in view of its present state; and what do you find?

[1] Gaudin had been Minister of Finance since the 20th Brumaire of the year VIII. He took that portfolio again during the Hundred Days.

[2] Mollien had been Minister of Public Funds since January 27, 1806. On leaving Blois, he went to Évreux. Cf. Mollien, *Mémoires d'un ministre du Trésor public* (Paris, 1898), III, 377.

[3] Decrès had been Minister of Marine and Colonies since October 3, 1801.

—that I have forced England to outspend me, and that her administration has accomplished less than mine.

"France's financial position," he resumed, "is the soundest in Europe. I had three hundred millions gold in the vaults of the Tuileries to offset the cost of the Saxony campaign and the present one. I leave behind me a capital sum of a hundred millions—my own expropriations from my civil list during the past ten years—my own property, every bit of it, just as surely as your pay belonged to you. You know perfectly well that even with the building programme counted in I never spent more than twelve or fourteen millions a year. Money never meant anything to me except the undertaking of useful or glorious enterprises. Never a thought have I given to my personal fortune on my own account. Therefore I have nothing. . . . I might have invested my savings year by year and put them away in safety, but I left them lumped in with the funds of the Extraordinary Domain. I thought only of France, not at all of myself, and too little of my loyal servants. I would far rather know your fortune made out of those millions, though, than see them split between Talleyrand and Metternich and doled out to the men who have betrayed me.

"I restored, furnished, and beautified the palaces with the funds of my civil list; only the Louvre was charged against the Extraordinary Domain,[1] on the score that it was a truly

[1] Napoleon's resources consisted of the civil list, properly so called; the privy purse, made up of what the sovereign might acquire by inheritance, gift, or purchase under regular provisions of the Civil Code; and finally, the Extraordinary Domain. Created by *senatus-consultum* of January 30, 1810, the Extraordinary Domain consisted of goods and landed properties acquired by conquests or treaties. The Emperor had sovereign right to dispose of this by way of subventions against army expenses, rewards for civil or military services, the erection of public monuments, or the encouragement of the arts. In 1814, the Extraordinary Domain held capital funds producing a revenue of approximately 38 millions, and fixed capital to the amount of 23 millions. In 1818 Count Corvetto, Minister of Finance, was obliged to declare in Parliament that the late government had "never diverted the least item of the Extraordinary Domain to the profit of the civil list." Cf. Alphonse Gautier, *Etudes sur la liste civile en France* (Paris, 1882), 38.

national investment of the fruits of conquest. What I allocated from the Domain to the Louvre and the Arcs de Triomphe[1] was my bonus as General-in-Chief."

He added that the French national debt amounted to nothing: that despite what the Russian campaign and the organization of a new army had cost, and despite the non-payments now resulting from the enemy's partial occupation of France, the entire debt would balance as soon as the books could be brought up to date.

This long discourse: these recollections of a past so filled with glory and so unlike the present; the painful thoughts that were bound to follow upon any such accounting: all this, it seemed, had worn the Emperor out. He was crushed.

"I need some rest," he told me; "and so do you, no doubt. Go to bed. I shall have you called again to-night."

It was 3 a.m.[2] when the Emperor finally sent for me.

[1] The Arcs de Triomphe of the Carousel and l'Etoile; the latter was incomplete.

[2] On the night of April 12–13, 1814. —Here begins one of the most important parts of these Memoirs. Caulaincourt is about to describe Napoleon's attempted suicide, of which he was the most direct witness. Although rumours of the suicide attempt quickly spread through Fontainebleau and even reached the Empress at Rambouillet (cf. Méneval, *Napoléon et Marie-Louise*, II, 107), the principal witnesses preserved such secrecy that the very fact of that attempt was long in doubt. J. de Norvins first brought the matter into print with his article "Napoléon" in the *Biographie nouvelle des contemporains* (Paris, 1824). Norvins errs in dating the event, and in several other respects, but his account is the most exact of those furnished by contemporaries who wrote of the attempt at secondhand. His comparative accuracy may be explained by his intimacy with Caulaincourt, whose confidence he enjoyed in the early 1820's. In 1905, however, Eugène Thoison restored the whole question to the realm of debate by publishing his monograph *Le Palais de Fontainebleau de février à avril*, 1814. "It is only after the Emperor's death," wrote M. Thoison, "that the tales of suicide grow so numerous that Antommarchi (*Mémoires du docteur F. Antommarchi*, I, III; Paris, 1825) cites them among the reasons compelling him to publish his book." Or in other words, none of the direct witnesses had as yet been heard from; for no one would think of treating as reliable testimony the account credited to the valet Constant in his *Mémoires* (Garnier ed., IV,

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He was in bed; and as usual his room was dimly lit by a night-lamp.

"Come here and sit down," he said, as soon as I entered—a most unwonted procedure, this, on his part. He foresaw, so he told me, that they would sever the Empress and his son from him; that there would be indignities of every sort in store for him; that they would surely seek to assassinate him, or at least to insult him, which for him would be worse than death.

It was not as though there were anything distasteful to him about the life he might lead at Elba; solitude held no terrors for him. He was under obligation to write the story of his campaigns—to repay the sacrifices of so many brave men by doing homage to their memory. No; he found pleasure in the prospect of that opportunity for proving to his old comrades that he was mindful of the services they had rendered to the country. But he could not become reconciled to seeing himself at the mercy of an insolent conqueror, or perhaps even a gaoler, and he would have to be prepared for anything. He saw himself in danger from assassins because the traitors who had forsaken him would stop at nothing to rid the Bourbons of him: they would never let him reach the Island of Elba. He had weighed his position well, and had carefully considered where he stood. He could not bear to

256). Those memoirs are known to be a compilation from the hands of J.-B. de Roquefort, Auguste Luchet, and others, one of whom—Villemarest—wrote the whole of the last two volumes of the original edition. Upon comparing Constant's recital with Caulaincourt's, a number of striking discrepancies will be noted—the chief of which is that according to the Duke of Vicenza the *valet de chambre* was called in very late, whereas Constant claims that he was the first to discover what was afoot, and that he did so at about midnight. Moreover, Constant is even at fault over the date, which he fixes as the night of April 11-12, when Caulaincourt, whose presence he notes beside the Imperial bed, was still in Paris. Thiers (XVII, 803 and 805) committed the same error; so did Bourrienne, and even Norvins. Thus it appears that Caulaincourt's narrative, besides clearing up many obscure points, constitutes the first full and authentic account of this tragic scene ever published; for Ségur, Belliard, Méneval, et cetera, speak only from hearsay.

think of seeing his name in a treaty which mentioned only himself and his family—which contained no stipulations for France and the army—not he, in whose name such treaties had been devoted so often to the glory of the nation and the troops.

"Always remember all I told you yesterday," he said. "In short, remember all I have said to you since your return from Paris, and note it down."

After pausing a moment, he bade me take from under his pillow and put in my pocket the letter he had just written to the Empress.[1] He then ordered me to go and fetch from his study, from a dressing-case which he described to me, a little red morocco pocket-book marked with the portrait of Marie Louise and his son, and with all Her Majesty's letters inside it. After a further moment of silence: "Give me your hand," said the Emperor; and he clung to it. "Embrace me" —and he drew me with emotion to his heart.

I tried in vain to choke back my tears: I wept despite myself, drenching his cheeks and hands. The Emperor seemed greatly affected and with moving kindliness he said: "I want

[1] Text of Napoleon's original signed letter in autograph to Marie Louise, as preserved in the *Archives de Caulaincourt* and hitherto unpublished except in connexion with these Memoirs:

"*Fontainebleau, the 13th at 3 o'clock in the morning.*—My dear Louise, I received your letter. I approve of your going to Rambouillet where your father will join you. It is the sole consolation you may have in our misfortune. For the past week I have looked forward eagerly to this moment. Your father has been misguided and malicious towards us, but he will be a good father to you and your son. Caulaincourt arrived. I sent you yesterday a copy of the arrangements he has signed, which assure your son a living. Farewell, my dear Louise. You are what I love best in the world. My misfortunes do not affect me except as they do you harm. You will love the most affectionate of husbands your whole life long. Kiss my son for me. Farewell, dear Louise. Thine always.—Napoleon."

To this letter the Duke of Vicenza attached the following note: "Letter written by the Emperor Napoleon to the Empress Marie Louise during the night of April 12–13, while he believed himself dying of the poison which he had taken. He had charged me to seal and deliver it to her; he afterwards told me to keep it."

you to be happy, my dear Caulaincourt. You deserve to be." There followed another pause, and then:

"Soon I shall exist no longer. Take the Empress my letter then. Keep her letters, with the portfolio they are in, to give to my son when he is grown. Tell the Empress that I trust in her devotion; that her father has not played fair with us; that she should try to have Tuscany for her son—that it is my last wish for them both. There is no excuse for Europe to deny him that proper settlement—seeing that I shall exist no longer! Tell the Empress I die in the conviction that she gave me all the happiness within her power, and that she never gave me the least cause for disquiet, and that I regret the loss of the throne for her sake only and because of my son, whom I would have made into a man worthy to rule France."

He requested me to remain devoted to them, to ward off the consequences of the bad advice that would inevitably be given them, to stand guard lest they ever act contrary to France's welfare; to speak of him to his son when the latter was come of an age to comprehend what the Emperor had done for the glory of France the beloved—to be as plain-spoken with him as I had been with his father. "You have my respect, Caulaincourt," he added; "you always have done everything that an honourable man should. In your conscience—your own feeling of secret satisfaction—you will find the reward of your integrity: there, and in the esteem of men of goodwill. I have nothing to offer you but the cameo that is in my jewel-box. Take and keep it as the last memento of your Emperor."[1]

He spoke in a faint voice, the utterance of a man in anguish, and often haltingly, after the fashion of a sufferer whose faculties are numbed with pain.

I cannot say how much this scene distressed me. Vainly I ventured several questions. "Listen to me—the time runs out"; such was his only answer. I tried to discover what it was he had taken. He had the hiccups, and was in great

[1] This cameo is to-day the property of Count Bernard de Kergorlay, great-grandson of the Duke of Vicenza.

pain. I besought him to let me go and call somebody—to permit me to help him in some way. In vain I strove to get away for a moment, or rather to escape: he held fast to me with his whole strength and did not reply. Once in a while he uttered a few words of affection for me, expressing his regret that now, after all the hardships I already had suffered for his sake, he was making me witness the sorry spectacle of his last moments.

For my own peace of mind, I begged him, would he not allow me to send for the Grand Marshal? My intention was to take advantage of that opportunity for summoning Yvan;[1] but the Emperor stubbornly refused to see anyone soever. "I want only you, Caulaincourt!"—and he ordered me to feel his pulse, adding that he began to notice the effect of what he had taken; that his head was growing heavy and his body insensible; wherefore he hoped the full effect would not be long in coming, and he would be able to sleep at last.

Upon my renewed insistence that somebody should be sent for, he told me not to thwart him: he demanded that of me as a final service. With my knowledge of his position, he went on, I was bound to perceive that his death might perhaps be the saving of France and of his family. My force of character was sufficient, so he had thought, to make me understand the advisability of the course he had chosen, and to prevent my seeking to prolong his anguish, since what he was feeling now was as nothing to the agony of the past fortnight. I tried vainly to break loose—to call some of his attendants. He clung to me with such strength that he would have been left with the half of my collar and torn jacket in his hand if he had not gripped me from the other side as well.

The doors were closed; the *valet de chambre* did not hear me. The hiccups increased; his limbs grew rigid; his chest and stomach heaved. The first seizure of retching was ineffectual, though for a moment the Emperor seemed certain

[1] Alexandre-Urbain Yvan (*b.* Toulon, 1765; *d.* Paris, 1839) was a baron of the Empire by letters patent of January 1, 1810, assistant surgeon at the Invalides and to the Emperor's Household. He had accompanied Napoleon on the Russian campaign.

to surrender to it. An icy chill had given way to a cold sweat, then to a burning fever. He seemed to be trying his best not to vomit; his teeth were clenched. During a breathing spell he told me to send his handsomest dressing-case to Prince Eugène for a memento, and to keep his finest sword[1] and his pistols for myself, in addition to the cameo portrait of him. "You are to tell Josephine that she has been much in my thoughts. . . . Give the Duke of Taranto one of my swords,"[2] he added; "it will be a souvenir of his loyal behaviour."

The voice was barely audible; the closing sentence, like those before it, had been interrupted by recurrent hiccups and violent nausea. His skin was parched and chill; all of a sudden it was covered with an icy sweat; I thought he was about to expire in my arms. And this time I managed to escape for an instant to call the *valet de chambre* or Roustam, and send for Yvan and the Grand Marshal.

The Emperor cried out to me, reproaching me for disturbing his last moments. He complained fretfully about the slow effect of the opium mixture he had taken.

"How hard it is to die," he exclaimed; "how wretched to have a constitution that fights off the ending of a life I am so anxious to see done with!"

His fretfulness and impatience were so extreme as to beggar all description. He called for death more eagerly than anyone ever has pleaded to be let live. Then he mentioned opium to me. I asked him how he had taken it, and he answered,

[1] This sword, called "Des Empereurs," and the pistols are today the property of the Countess Gérard de Moustier, granddaughter of Count d'Espeuilles-Vicence, who lately placed them on view at Malmaison. According to a letter of M. Germain Bapst, dated April 4, 1895 (*Archives du comte Gérard de Moustier*), Bonaparte commissioned this sword in the year IX, at a cost of 10,000 francs, from the Versailles arms foundry directed by Boutet.

[2] In the audience granted to Macdonald by Napoleon on the 13th, he personally gave the marshal the sword of Murad Bey which he had worn at the battle of Mont Tabor. (Macdonald, *Souvenirs*, 302.)

"In a little water." I examined the glass, which, along with a scrap of paper, still stood on his dressing-case. There was a trace of something in the glass. The Emperor, growing now more nauseated, was no longer able to keep himself from vomiting. I was too late with the vessel, though part of what he first gave up was caught, and, as the seizure was renewed, a little something greyish followed from it.

The Emperor plainly was in despair because his stomach relieved itself of that preparation. My questions then led him to confess that, ever since the surprise attack at Malo-Jaroslawetz,[1] he had carried the poison suspended in a little sachet-bag around his neck; that he had had that packet made up for himself in case of accident, out of his unwillingness to risk falling alive into the enemy's hands. The dose, so he had been assured, was more than enough to kill two men.[2]

He told me afterwards that he thought it was the same preparation[3] Condorcet had used, and likewise Cardinal de Loménie.[4] He added that he felt repugnance for any other means of dying, by which the body was left bloodstained or

[1] October 24, 1812. Following that encounter, Napoleon had had Yvan give him the dose of poison which, while on campaign, he thereafter wore suspended around his neck in a black taffeta bag provided to his order by Turenne. At ordinary times, he kept the poison in his campaigning kit.

[2] In addition to opium, the prescription for this poison called for belladonna and white hellebore. Condorcet had obtained the formula from Cabanis (cf. an article by Yvan the younger, *Musée des familles*, 1846, 205).

[3] Condorcet, following his arrest at Clamart, poisoned himself in Bourg-la-Reine Prison, 9th Germinal of the year II (March 29, 1794).

[4] Cardinal Etienne-Charles de Loménie de Brienne, former minister of Louis XVI and Archbishop of Sens, and afterwards Constitutional Bishop of Yonne, was found dead in the prison at Sens, 1st Vendemiaire of the year II (February 19, 1794). It seems probable, however, that he died of a stroke.

the face disfigured; that in the supposition that he would be exposed to view after his death, he had wished his faithful Guard still to recognize the calmness of expression which they had known his face to wear in the midst of battle.

The vomiting continued—or the spasms, rather, for now but little came of them. I found the waiting long before anybody arrived; but everyone was asleep—it took time for them to get up and dress. At last the Grand Marshal came in. The Emperor spoke not a word; so I told Bertrand what had happened, and what I had learned from the *valets de chambre*. "What a task it is to die in bed," the Emperor said to us; "when in war the least thing is enough to end one's life!"

Yvan had entered; I questioned him, and announced him to His Majesty, who called for him and told him to feel his pulse. He complained incessantly of the longing to vomit. "Doctor," he told Yvan, "give me a different dose—something stronger, that will make what I have taken finish its work. It is your duty to do so; it is the bounden duty of those who would serve me." The surgeon voiced his refusal by saying that he was no assassin; that he was in His Majesty's service to take care of him and keep him alive—wherefore he never would act contrary to his own conscience. Furthermore, he, Yvan, had told him as much a while ago, when the Emperor had asked him for something to induce death; and he could do no better now, said he, than repeat what he had told him then.

We were all of us panic-stricken and depressed; we stood silently gazing at each other in abject misery. For every one of us felt that death would have been a blessing indeed for the Emperor—yet nobody gave the desired response to His Majesty's urgent pleading. His nausea redoubled. We summoned Constant, the valet; and M. de Turenne came in with him. The Emperor renewed his importunities to Yvan. The Court Surgeon declared that he would rather quit him on the spot than leave himself

open to any more such proposals. He went out and never came back.[1]

The Emperor's suffering was extreme. He was calm and frantic by turns, and his face had undergone a profound change; it had fallen in, so to speak, contracting the features.

We all of us stayed with him until about 7 a.m. I searched his dressing-case and interrogated the Mameluke and Constant, who was his bodyservant. They told me that for several days past his whole talk had been of nothing except ways to commit suicide. Yesterday, they said, he had given his pistols much scrutiny, and had taken some bullets from his dressing-case. Roustam added that when the Emperor did not find the powder-flask which customarily was with his weapons, and which he, Roustam, had just made off with (for he had noticed His Majesty fondling his pistols, which was most unusual), he had asked for it. I learned from the valets that several times he had gone so far as to tell them he meant to take poison; that he had begged them both, but Constant in particular, to bring him a panful of coals whilst he was in his bath, so that he might asphyxiate himself.[2] All these details went to show that, as devoted servants of their master, they thought they had taken every precaution; moreover, that they had let him out of sight as little as possible.

[1] According to Méneval (*Napoléon et Marie-Louise*, II, 110), who describes this scene from a few words which Caulaincourt and Montesquiou may have let drop to him several days later at Rambouillet, Yvan completely lost his head, bolted from the room, and collapsed on a couch in the adjoining salon, where he went into violent hysterics. A few moments later he rushed down into the courtyard and, finding a saddle-horse tied to one of the gratings, he mounted it, and galloped away. Cf. also Constant, *Mémoires*, IV, 260. Likewise, Beillard (*Mémoires*, I, 196) writes: "When the Emperor was out of danger, Yvan, pale as death, left his presence and departed from Fontainebleau, never to return."

[2] It may be recalled that the bath-tub of the period commonly was fitted with a close canopy to keep the draughts out and the steam in. One may note here, also, that according to this passage and prior references, Roustam, despite what he says in his *Mémoires*, must have been present at Fontainebleau when the suicide was attempted.

According to what the Emperor told me afterwards of the preparation which he had swallowed, he had carried it for a while around his neck like a scapular, then in his pockets, and finally for some little time in his travelling-case. I never asked him, nor did he ever tell me, who had given him that preparation. I have reported the exact words which he addressed to M. Yvan. Had he been given an adequate dose? Had he not been given a trifle in order to gratify him? I asked myself these questions, which doubtless one will be tempted to ask me in turn. If put to the Emperor, my questions would have been an impertinence; nor are such details essential to the fact in itself. Necessarily, therefore, my reader will be as discreet as I.

I went out for a minute to speed the copying of the ratifications, for which Orloff was waiting. I would gladly have had the Russian clear of the Palace just then, for I was fearful lest some news of what had happened might leak out to him. We had enjoined the strictest silence upon the valets and the domestic staff, who must in any case have had but a vague knowledge of what went on.

The Emperor sent for me to come back a moment later. He asked me if the night's event were known in the Palace. He was plainly in despair because his strong constitution had fought death off when his whole heart was set on dying.

He spoke to me again of his predicament, of the move he thought it probable that Austria would make to part the Empress from him. Life, he repeated, was insufferable to him. He dwelt incessantly upon the means of ending it, and complained that he had been deprived of them all.

"That is mere childishness on the part of my *entourage*," he told me. "Mine is no common predicament. To treat me now like some nobody with the spleen is an insult to me, not a proof of attachment. Tell me honestly, Caulaincourt: in my place, would you not prefer death to the fate in store for me? To the insults I may be made to suffer? To the disgrace of ratifying this treaty that mentions nothing but my personal interests? I never will sign it. Russian

captivity suits me better. That will set seal to the dishonour of those who have betrayed me, and of the monarchs who recognized me, who made treaties with me, allied themselves with me and my family, and who reject my family today as they do me because Fortune deserts me and smiles on them instead. Was that how I acted towards them when their capitals were mine—when I could have dethroned them?"

So moved was I by the justice of the Emperor's remarks that his statement of the case affected me as deeply as it did him. Seeing eye to eye with the Emperor, I told him frankly that, if this vain attempt at suicide became known, there were many who would consider it mere stage play. The Emperor talked of his death, of devices for killing himself; and he demanded that I, as his loyal friend, should put him in the way of achieving it after the fashion of those old Romans who drank the hemlock. Had the cup been there, I would have handed it to him. But to plot out a death, contrive for it, bring the means to him, arrange the whole matter in cold blood—there, I confess, was a task that lay beyond the compass of my devotion. . . . "Even so, Caulaincourt," he repeated, "it is the greatest proof of devotion you could give me. Prolong my situation and you force me to sign the treaty—you prolong my anguish."

The Emperor was suffering severely from pain and thirst. His face looked shrivelled. He was drowsy, and had sunk into the lethargy of total exhaustion. He took a swallow of water and seemed to feel the need of sleep. Despite that, however, I made mention of the propriety, and the vital importance, too, of his seeing the Duke of Taranto, who wished to return to Paris and already had asked twice for an audience. I begged him to brace up—to let Macdonald see him for a moment, even if he had to stay in bed and claim that he was ill. I suggested that the marshal, after seeing His Majesty, would be able at a pinch to give the lie to whatever anyone could say about last night's event. "Let me have your arm," he told me.

He tried to take a few steps in his room, but his legs were

too weak to support him. He had changed alarmingly, and I was barely able to hold him upright. I dragged him to the window, which he made me throw open. The air seemed to revive him a little, but Roustam had to be called to help me put him back to bed—nor was this easily managed with the Emperor so nearly unconscious. His arms and legs seemed to be asleep; there was no spring to them. I conversed with him for a moment longer, urging him to take some nourishment and to rest, so that he would be able to receive the Duke of Taranto at noon; and then, telling him that I was going to attend to all the business which I thought it imperative to wind up, I left the Emperor's quarters.

No details of this secret drama had transpired. I found evidence to that effect as soon as I had left His Majesty. Upon returning to my apartment, I jotted down these particulars and all that the Emperor had said during this dreadful night. Thereafter I was with the Duke of Taranto, who was anxious to take leave of the Emperor.

At about 11 a.m. I returned to His Majesty, to urge him to receive the marshal. They had made the Emperor drink something, and his stomach had no. been upset by it. He was more composed; he had seen the Duke of Bassano, and knew that all was in readiness for the exchange of ratifications. He had talked also with the Grand Marshal, who had resolved to go with him to Elba. This lofty devotion touched him, nor could he speak of it without emotion.

"My mind is made up," he told me then, after a momentary silence. "I have just had a talk with Maret. He will give you the State Secretariat's orders for ratifying the treaty. I shall live, since death cares as little for me in my bed as it does on the battlefield. And there will be courage, too, to make life endurable after such happenings as these. I will write the History of the Brave!"

He instructed me to make everything ready for the signing of the ratifications, so that he could send the Duke of Taranto on his way and get Orloff clear of Fontainebleau. Feeble

though he was, and of a deep, persistent pallor, he left his bed. He could barely stand; we had to put him into a chair and throw open a casement. The air revived him, and he came to his senses sufficiently so that we could dress him well enough to receive the marshal. I left him with Count Turenne, whose attentiveness was as great as his devotion. Having given all instructions for the ratifications, the copies of which Bassano got him to sign,[1] I sent word to the Duke of Taranto, who came immediately and had a long talk with him.[2] The Grand Marshal and Turenne, who had gone out, came back in. Leaving them with His Majesty, I completed the notation of the details here set forth.

Count Orloff was despatched at last, and took his departure. The Secretariat prepared the ratifications with the other Allied Powers; the Emperor wished me to have charge of those formalities, too. I also worked with the Grand Marshal over the arrangements for the Emperor's departure.

It seemed to me that the journey to Elba was a foregone conclusion. What he wished to keep and take with him

[1] It was then that the Emperor signed this letter, of prior date, the original of which is in the Caulaincourt *Archives*, file 13:

"*Fontainebleau*, 12 *April* 1814.—Monsieur, the Duke of Vicenza: I transmit to you a copy, certified by me, of the treaty of the 11th of this month. I authorize you to deliver such transcript or extract of it as you may deem necessary to my interests, and to those of the princes and princesses of my family. That being the sole purpose of this letter, I beg, etc.—Napoléon." Frédéric Masson (*L'Impératrice Marie-Louise*, 586) was of the opinion that Napoleon did not consent to ratify until April 13. Caulaincourt's account removes all doubt on that score.

[2] ". . . His Majesty appeared to start from a dream, and, surprised at the sight of me, he stood up, holding out his hand to me and apologizing for not having heard me come in. Scarcely had he uncovered his face, when I was struck with the change in him; he was of a greenish-yellow hue. 'Is Your Majesty in pain?' I said to him. 'Yes,' answered the Emperor; 'I was very ill last night.' Whereupon he sat down again, resumed the same posture as before, and seemed buried anew in his thoughts." Nowhere in his *Souvenirs*, however, from which this passage is taken (300), does Macdonald make the slightest allusion to rumours of suicide.

was decided upon. The embarrassing point was to find money. As I have said already, there was very little cash left, that having been used to defray the cost of paying the Guard. The removal of the Exchequer to Orléans therefore reduced the Emperor to virtual dependence upon what the Empress had been able to salvage. But she had been obliged to give a considerable sum to each of the Emperor's brothers, and to pay for the entertainment of her whole *entourage*; her daily needs had to be provided for, and likewise the maintenance of her Household; and the Emperor, who felt far more concern for her and his son than for himself, was unwilling that she should hold out her palm to the father who had forsaken her so heartlessly in her misfortune. His Majesty decided, in consequence, that an attempt should be made to bring into Fontainebleau a portion of whatever money the Empress had saved, and that she should keep the rest. Steps were taken accordingly. The officers who were despatched to the Empress brought back a small sum; and I took it upon myself to do likewise.[1]

The Emperor was eager that I should return straightway to Paris, in order to hasten the settling up of all his affairs that remained unfinished. It was necessary to secure the immediate despatch of the Allied commissioners who were to accompany His Majesty. Whatever pertained to the title-transfer of the Island of Elba had to be settled, and likewise the outfitting of the corvettes that were to serve as transports. In short, it was needful to clear away the thousand-and-one difficulties that every objective presented when one was dealing with a malevolent government whose agents took delight in obstructing everything. The Emperor was eager,

[1] In the Peyrusse *Mémorial et Archives*, proofs and illustrations, 145, may be found the full accounting of this matter of finances, as rendered by the paymaster-general of Imperial Headquarters. Those records go to show that on leaving Fontainebleau, Napoleon had a total of 3,979,915 fr. 16 at his disposal, less a certain amount for expenditures during the final days. Of that sum, all but 488,913 fr. 16 had been brought in since April 10 (by Peyrusse, Caulaincourt, and others) out of the six millions left in Marie Louise's funds after Dudon had raided them.

also, for me to go and see his wife and son at Rambouillet. He talked for a long time with me about all these details. First he would be resigned, he would realize how vital it was for him to leave as soon as possible—and a moment later he would relapse into his earlier frame of mind.

"I was not able to die," he said, sorrowfully; "does Fortune hold some fresh outrages in store for me? You might far better have given me the means of ridding myself of this unbearable existence. If they have me assassinated along the way, or if they put me through humiliating experiences, you will have to blame it on yourself, Caulaincourt!" These outbursts of complaining recurred with each moment that passed, and were voiced sometimes with steady resolution and sometimes with the accents of despair.

He saw that I did not bend before his importunities. Consequently, sensing how vital it was to his best interest that I should get back to Paris as quickly as possible, so that I might contradict anything that had chanced to transpire about the night's events,[1] after several hours of indecision and many successive conferences with M. de Bassano, the Grand Marshal, and me, he began discussing the particulars of the plan which he was definitely forced to settle upon. It seemed to him, however, that his strength was not equal to the effort of crossing France slowly with his battalion of escorts; of being received with cheers, oftentimes, but perhaps with occasional coldness or embarrassment; of viewing once more every detail, so to speak, of the France he loved so much; of appearing before her as a piteous object—he who had been her glory and delight. This brought forth the reflexion that doubtless those who received him well would get a black mark for it, and that he would feel hurt by those who received him ill. After weighing everything carefully, he thought it preferable for

[1] "The concealment of this vain attempt of Napoleon's to escape from his destiny, and from the final necessity of setting his name to his dynasty's downfall, was taken for granted. The Emperor himself gave a brief injunction to that effect. The secret was carefully kept for a long while: so absolute was the sway of prudence and discretion in that austere establishment." (Ségur, *Histoire et Mémoires*, VII, 200.)

the public interest and his own, that, if he resigned himself to leaving, he should travel by post-chaise, without any suite, and incognito. With that in view, he then maintained that the sooner he left the better; for he felt that here was perhaps the only way of escaping the ambuscades laid for him by the Provisional Government.

A circumstance happened to settle his resolve: just at that moment he had a letter from the Empress. It affected him greatly, and at once restored the confidence which he had placed from the outset in the Emperor of Austria's religious principles. "Surely," he told me, "his principles will make him anxious to have his daughter go with me at the earliest occasion when she can show me proofs of attachment and give me the consolation I need. Besides, it is one of my father-in-law's moral convictions that a young wife ought not to quit her husband's side."

He made me read the Empress's letter, which was full of tender and touching phrases. She stated in the most positive fashion that it was her wish and pleasure to rejoin His Majesty and be his consolation, as soon as she had seen her father.

This letter brought him back to life again; that I must say. It was as though another future opened out before him, with a glimpse of unknown happiness. He felt certain, while the moment lasted, that Her Majesty would join him instantly at Elba if he resigned himself to going there. Feebly then, after so many days of untold misery, he still was divided between the prospective pleasure of seeing her, of his reunion with her and his son, and the ever-recurrent idea of writing finis to a burdensome existence. And now, after so prolonged an agony of grief, Nature vindicated herself: the instinct of self-preservation prevailed over that great character's fatal resolves. He was gladdened by the attachment, let me say, that his wife showed for him, and by the thought of writing his memoirs—of giving their due to the brave men who had stood France in good stead. When he reflected upon this, it seemed to make the future endurable. To live, it struck him now, was a courageous act in keeping with his

character. . . . People who have had frequent opportunities of conversing with the Emperor will be less astonished at this veering about than at his having resolved to die; for we had always heard him condemn suicide as an act of weakness.[1]

The bitterness upon which the Emperor had fed for some time past had given way now to kindly thoughts. It appeared to me that his mind was altogether made up. The main thing was to speed the Empress and her father to their interview, upon which the Emperor kept harping constantly because of the ill-starred hope of getting Tuscany for his son. Another prime consideration was to escape as quickly as possible from the dangerous vicinity of Paris, and from the plots which he knew his enemies would surely lay for him. Consequently, the Emperor urged me to be off and lend speed to everything. That lively imagination of his, passing with inconceivable readiness from one point to another, already flattered itself in possession of its every desire. Since the Empress's letter, there could not be the slightest doubt—so it seemed to His Majesty—either of her success when she approached her father, or of her reunion with himself for the journey to Elba.

At that moment, however, he was so wretched that one would have been ashamed at the very thought of anything which might have broken a single thread of this hopeful clue to future consolation. I, too, bent every wish towards that reunion—and the more especially because it appeared to us an effective safeguard for the Emperor's security. A vestige of respect and consideration for Austria was certain, during the journey, to preclude any attempt against his life: Marie Louise's presence would have that effect upon French secret agents and the foreign troops. We interpreted everything in such a way as to ease the blows of adverse Fortune. In spite of memory and reflexion—carried away, as it were despite myself, by the need of letting my mind rest momentarily upon some happier thought—I now seized as readily as

[1] At St. Helena, Napoleon said to O'Meara: "It has always been one of my maxims that a man shows more real courage by enduring misfortunes that by doing away with his life."

the Emperor upon any kindly and consoling sentiment that was able to cheer and comfort him. This letter from the Empress seemed to me a present from on high, so timely was its arrival. She had put new heart into the Emperor, she had brought him to life again—wherefore I longed to see her, and to thank her on my own behalf for being so kind to us. That *us* is pardonable, I hope; for my feelings at that instant overleapt all bounds of rank and mere propriety. My gratitude was one and the same with my Imperial Master's: I had suffered no less than he, and I needed as much consoling for his grief.

The Emperor, reverting now to other ideas, was apparently astonished that the Allied commissioners had not yet arrived. That was silly, however, for here it was only April 13, and ratifications had thus far been exchanged with none but the Tsar of Russia. Very judicious, though, was the Emperor's further remark: that for him to travel incognito by post-chaise simplified everything; that no doubt they would be only too glad of his speedier departure from French soil, and he likewise. Besides, that way of travelling would leave at the Government's disposal the escort of the Guard, fifteen hundred strong, which they were to give him, and which might arouse suspicion if placed in his hands. That, said he, was a weighty consideration for a new Government, full of uneasy misgivings. "They are wrong," he added; "for my sole intention is to reach the Island of Elba, and to lead a private life there."

The Emperor discoursed with his usual acuteness upon the whole question of the new French Government's best interests. To hear him, you would have thought he was discussing someone else's affairs. It was inconceivable how disinterestedly he held himself aloof from every question, and with how impartial and superior a sense of judgement. There was not a trace of bitterness in his observations, not a personal remark, not an *arrière-pensée*: in his fondness for France, he could see but her. Since his day, so he thought, was past, he cared only for her future—for the prosperity that he maintained was to be hers. "Talleyrand is probably right," he told me.

"With me out of the way, the Bourbons were more suitable than any other faction, for they have roots. No alternative party had a leg to stand on."

I must confess that I could not believe my ears. My imagination was stunned by this transition from the death-bed and last wishes of our hero to the fitness of the dynasty chosen to replace him. These lofty and temperate comments upon what should be the guiding principles of his successors' government, and upon the men who had brought him to his present pass; this calm self-abnegation, heedless of all personal concern, whilst danger hemmed him in on every side; this preoccupation with France's welfare and the Restoration's progress, when, but a moment earlier, his own immediate peril had been too much for him: such contrasts, I repeat, left me dumbfounded. I doubted my power of retaining all I heard. . . .

"Here," he went on, "I cause uneasiness; and I feel uneasy. But before I can leave Fontainebleau you must have everything arranged, and you must inform me whether they mean to abide by their pledges concerning Elba and what is planned for the Empress. Be on your way, my dear Caulaincourt! Stay in Paris; that is where I need you. The Tsar Alexander feels kindly towards you; that can simplify the whole business. He has no motive whatsoever for opposing the award of Tuscany to the Empress, and he is in honour bound to see that the Government shall abide by what he has promised me. I do not doubt that the Empress will rejoin me in another three days. In view of her situation, her father cannot refuse to let her have Tuscany; that will be decided immediately. Then nothing can delay our reunion. Her father will put no obstacles in the way of that—surely not, if she applies direct to him. If Metternich interposes, though, his intrigues will ruin everything."

The Emperor said this to me in so rueful a tone that I saw plainly that his self-flattery, like mine, had lasted but a moment. Thereupon he urged me to go and get ready, and he added that he was about to write to the Empress; not wishing to constrain her in any way, he would leave her free to do what-

ever she might please or think fit; if she rejoined him, he wished it to be owing wholly to her affection.

"If you see her, do not insist that she join me; I would rather have her at Florence than at Elba, if she came there with a frown on her face. I no longer have a throne; there are no illusions left. Cæsar can be content as a common citizen. It may cost his young consort something to be plain Cæsar's wife! At the Empress's age one still needs toys to play with. If she is not going to pride herself, of her own accord, on her devotion to me, then it is better not to be urgent with her. That would chill her enthusiasm for the Tuscan matter, which is far more important for my son, and even for her. When a few months have passed, she will wish of her own accord to spend some time with me. Things can be arranged so that every year I may go and spend a few months with her in Italy, when it becomes apparent that I have resolved to meddle with nothing, and that I am content, like Sancho, with the governing of my island and the pleasure of writing my memoirs."

The Emperor corresponded privately with Méneval, the Empress's secretary of requests, who had been his private secretary, and with his aide-de-camp Count Caffarelli, commandant and major-domo of the Household. They were urged to persuade the Empress to speak emphatically to her father. The Emperor insisted on Tuscany at all times. I saw the Emperor once more before I left. He was extremely pale and worn out, but calm and resolute. He repeated everything that he already had told me. With the journey to Elba decided upon, the arrangements for it had to be made in two ways, one for going with the Empress and the other without her. He still flattered himself with the hope that she would rejoin him at Montargis—in which case the journey to Saint-Tropez would have been made in ten days, instead of by travelling day and night.

I went down with the Emperor into the garden, where he alternately sat and walked for some little time. The open air did him good: though weak when he came out of his apartment, and in need of an arm to help him down the

stairs, he was better once he was out of doors. The Grand Marshal joined us. All those arrangements and orders were repeated in his presence, and then the Emperor dismissed me. The Empress's letter, I repeat, had revived him—had put spunk into him, if I may be pardoned a vulgar expression.

CHAPTER X

Last Mission to Paris

I RETURNED to Paris,[1] taking with me the ratifications duly drawn up for exchange with all the Powers. The subsequent exchanges were effected on the 15th and 16th—all of them, that is, except the one with England, which did not take place until later,[2] there having been no time as yet for the return of her ratification from London. I procured the despatch of the commissioners who were to accompany the Emperor. Shuvalov, whom he had liked well enough, was recalled from Rambouillet. General Wroleck replaced him at the Empress's side; and Shuvalov reported to Fontainebleau at once. But the despatch of the orders to General Dalesme,[3] concerning the transfer of the Island of Elba, and to the navy, regarding the assignment of corvettes, was met with protest and delay. The obstructiveness of the French Government made itself felt on every hand, even when it came to the scheduling of relays with the postal administration. Although the Government was outwardly as anxious to see the Emperor depart from Fontainebleau as he himself was to be gone, it put a spoke in the wheel whenever possible. The Ministry of War wanted to remove the batteries from Elba. In a word, difficulties of every sort sprang up and were removed

[1] April 14.

[2] The *Archives de Caulaincourt* (file 13) contain the original copies of the plenary powers given by Napoleon to the Duke of Vicenza to exchange ratifications with England, Russia, and Austria. They are dated from Fontainebleau, April 12, 1814. Macdonald (*Souvenirs*, 302) pretends that he went alone to deliver the treaty as ratified by Napoleon at 11 a.m., April 14. Incidentally, Caulaincourt contradicts himself farther on by saying that the exchange of ratifications with Prussia did not take place until the 19th.

[3] Jean-Baptiste, Baron Dalesme (1763–1832), was Governor of Elba.

from one moment to the next; and for the carrying out of the treaty, the Emperor was indebted solely to the insistence and fair-dealing of the Tsar Alexander, whose sense of justice and courtesy always made him receive my protests good-naturedly and require that the right thing be done.

On the 12th, the Prince of Neuchâtel had sent in his adherence, and the army's along with it. He informed the Provisional Government that the army, being essentially submissive, had been unable to deliberate, but would prove its adherence as soon as duty permitted it to do so; and as it had been true to its oath until now, so likewise would it be loyal to the prince whom the French nation was recalling to his ancestral throne. Berthier left for Paris the following day.[1]

The Emperor had been more incensed than affected by his leave-taking. That departure (he called it the desertion of his oldest companion-in-arms) had angered him, occurring as it did before he himself had left Fontainebleau. "Berthier is forsaking me before I leave Fontainebleau!" he repeated. Nothing could make him admit that it was necessary for the Prince to be in Paris that instant, that his presence there was just as urgently required, on account of the army's situation, as was that of the Ministers and Marshal Moncey, Inspector-General of Gendarmerie,[2] all of whom had been sent for and were obliged to leave at that time.

He was equally loud in expressing his disapproval because the Ministers, those of Police[3] and War in particular, had not

[1] This declaration of Berthier's adherence was published by the *Moniteur* in its issue of April 13. The declaration was dated from Fontainebleau, April 11.

[2] After the capitulation of Paris, Moncey rallied the fragments of the divisions there involved and drew them off to Fontainebleau. He subscribed to the régime of the Provisional Government on April 11.

[3] Rovigo (*Mémoires*, V, 103) sought to condone his behaviour. Upon arriving at Paris from Orléans, he had had to give the Tsar his word that he would not set foot outside the capital. Caulaincourt took him to task for this; and there followed a lively exchange of words.

come through Fontainebleau on their way to Paris. He was hurt by that oversight: disrespect was his word for it.

Since the 12th, the Emperor's abdication had of course been published and placarded all over Paris, and the National Guard had assumed the white cockade—much to the regret, so I was assured, of the greater number of its members.[1] The alien rulers, with a view to strengthening the new Government, were personally in favour of the retention of the triple colours, which both army and populace clung to. However, they gave way to the Count of Artois's wishes in the matter, and to the persistence of the Prince of Benevento, who was nominally acting for him, though against his will and judgement, so it was said. Everybody had been impressed by the rejection of the white cockade at the time when its adoption was first proposed to the leaders of the National Guard. By that refusal, its chief-of-staff, Allent, had averted an outburst which would probably have settled the question in favour of the Tricolour.

By his opposition at that time, Allent rendered a great service to the faction that insisted on a return to the old insignia; for while a few days did not suffice to bring about a change of opinion, they were all that were needed to force it upon the recalcitrant and to win over *en masse* all those who were in a hurry to gain favour at any price. It was being said that the Tricolour cockade could not be offensive to the Bourbon princes, since they themselves had worn it; and besides, those same colours would again be united in the National-Guard uniform which Monsieur was wearing and in which he was to make his entry. This concession struck

[1] In the forenoon of April 9, the Provisional Government decreed that the National Guard should assume the white cockade; and General Dessolle passed the decree on to his corps, as an order of the day, the same evening. On the 13th, the Provisional Government established by decree that the Oriflamme and the white cockade were officially the French Colours, and ordered the army as a whole to observe this decision. Cf. Viel-Castel, *Histoire de la Restauration*, I, 309. According to Pasquier (*Mémoires*, II, 329), "The procedure was carried out as decreed with far greater ease than one had ventured to hope."

the foreigners as a trivial matter, and they attached not the slightest importance to it. Henry IV had said: "Paris is worth a Mass." "And Louis XVIII," remarked a witty fellow, "may well say that the throne of France is worth a cockade adorned with twenty years of victory."

In order to smooth everything over, and to make this symbol carry the stamp of the royal *imprimatur*, it was thereupon agreed, according to the report I heard, that the leaders of the National Guard should appear before Monsieur and proffer him the white cockade: whereupon Monsieur would remove from his hat the Tricolour which he had been wearing and offer it to them, with the statement that he would like to keep it in remembrance of the nation's glory and his love for the men of France . . . one of those occasional happy phrases which he had the knack of.

But all these schemes, the details of which I give in order to convey a true understanding of that epoch, were, as it turned out, futile. The cockade was as little respected as the oath to the Emperor had been a while before—and as the Senate's vaunted constitution was soon to be.

Returning to the Count of Artois's entrance: several detachments had been sent to meet him at Bondy, and he entered Paris in the forenoon of the 12th, with National Guards lining the route. The invaders had the good taste not to let any foreign forces be in evidence.[1] The Senate had turned out in a body to present the Count of Artois with its decree of the 14th, whereby the Provisional Government of France was turned over to him in his capacity of Lieutenant-General of the Realm, what time Louis-Stanislas-Xavier should accept the constitutional charter recalling him to the French throne.[2]

[1] "It seemed more fitting to let the ceremony be entirely French. It was for that reason that the Allied Sovereigns did not participate in it, nor did any of their troops join the procession." (Castlereagh to Lord Liverpool, April 13, 1814, as cited by Dupuis. *Le Ministère de Talleyrand en* 1814, I, 221.)

[2] Decree of April 14, 1814. It was presented to Monsieur at the Tuileries that evening.

In response to that Senate which had thought itself entitled to choose a king and draw up a constitution (since it had arrogated to itself the right of dethroning its Emperor), the Prince, so I was assured, had replied that he had not been authorized by the King to accept the charter that was presented to him; but he believed he might say in the King's name that His Majesty would admit the bases of it, which he proceeded to enumerate.

The Prince thanked the Senate for everything it had done to help Restoration. Some Senators thereupon began to have their eyes opened, perceiving that neither they themselves nor their work would be held in the high esteem which they had anticipated. It has since been rumoured that the Count of Artois, far from approving of the Senate's action, had had Vitrolles write Talleyrand (Vitrolles having joined the Prince a few days before the Allies entered Paris—it is thought to have been on the 23rd)[1] that Monsieur objected because the desire for a constitutional system had been allowed expression in the Senate.[2] If such were actually the case, it would give some idea of what principles the princes held, and what their desires were. Not having seen the documents in question, I by no means vouch for those assertions.

According to some persons, this letter of Vitrolles to Talleyrand, speaking for Monsieur, was the first word received from him following his departure from Paris, and it expressed approval of everything that had been done.[3] What seemed to be wise policy at that time may perhaps prove embarrassing to-day. Might there not be a desire to give sanction now to what was then kept dark—to something one would not have

[1] Vitrolles, leaving Paris on March 6, had had a preliminary conference with the Count of Artois at Nancy. He regained Paris during the night of April 2–3, after his capture and escape as related on p. 361–2. He left the capital again on the 5th to rejoin Monsieur, and accompanied him on his way in to Paris.

[2] See Vitrolles's letter (*Mémoires*, I, 372) to Talleyrand from Châlons, April 9, in reply to the Provisional Government's letter of the 7th that accompanied the report of the Senate's proceedings of the day before.

[3] There was nothing to this.

dared to say, let alone put in writing? To-day, for the good of the party, would one not like to make believe that the Prince never gave his assent to any charter—that on the contrary, then as now, he would have declared himself for the royal prerogative, full, plenary, and absolute, which certain persons would doubtless like to give him in order to use it to their advantage under cover of his name, and perhaps against Royal Authority itself?

On the 16th, the Lieutenant-General added three members and a secretary to the Provisional Government, designating it the Government Council. The three were the Marshal-Dukes of Conegliano and Reggio, and General Dessolle, Commandant of the National Guard. Those appointments, so it was said in Paris, were truly heartbreaking to the Prince of the Moskowa and the Duke of Ragusa. Vitrolles was named Secretary in Council to reward him for his perilous journey and the services he had rendered of late.[1] Thenceforth, the talk in Paris was that the Duke of Dalberg had sent him, at the Prince of Benevento's instigation, to the Allied Sovereigns, some said, to propose the Regency, and to the Count of Artois, said others, to foment and pave the way for the late revolution.[2] Then for the first time there was mention made of his trip to Châtillon to propose the Regency, it was said; instead of which, so rumour added, he had substituted the Bourbons through motives of his own. It was on his return trip from seeing the Count of Artois, rumour then went on to say, that he, together with Wessenberg and the Swedish envoy, Skjoldebrand, had been seized by the residents of Saint-Thiébaut, who took them to General Piré, whose detachments had struck out from that flank, and brought them in to Headquarters at Saint-Dizier at the moment when we were breaking camp for Doulevant, where Wessenberg concealed him by passing him off as his valet.[3] What limits can there be to one's inferences regarding Austria's behaviour,

[1] Vitrolles had the title of Provisional Secretary of State.

[2] Cf. Charles Dupuis, *Le Ministère de Talleyrand en* 1814, I, 109.

[3] See page 43, note 2.

when one finds Vitrolles in company with an Austrian envoy? Was I then at fault in thinking and saying that it was impracticable to make peace at a congress where (for all its parade of family feeling and the Emperor Francis's interest in our cause) the Power that stood paramount amongst the Allies continually showed itself, throughout those negotiations, in the overt rôle of protector and friend of men who, in the person of their Sovereign, were betraying the son-in-law of that Power's master?

Before reverting to Paris, it is well to call the reader's attention to the advantage to which I urged the Emperor to turn the fact of Wessenberg's arrival at Headquarters.

"He is a less intemperate man than Metternich," he answered, "and more honest. Even though he is on his way back from London where, more than any place else, one imbibes the views along with the manners of the country, he will have remained an Austrian. He realizes, I am positive, that it is not to his master's interest to divide up France, depriving her of the preponderance which Antwerp gave her in dealings with England. I am convinced that he wants to weaken us on the Continent, but without depriving us of the means of facing down Britain's political and commercial monopolism. Foe of France though he is to-day, he does not want Europe to have any regrets to-morrow over having let everything go by the board because of Castlereagh's pretensions and Alexander's ambition. Yes, I will see him; but nothing will come of any of that. The Russians and British do not want to negotiate. The Congress was a put-up farce, and its dissolution brought the curtain down on a deception scene in which Metternich played either villain or dupe. Alexander thinks himself strong enough now to have no further use for dissimulation, and Castlereagh has won Metternich over. The decision now rests, as I said long ago, upon the lot of battle alone. I am across the enemy's rear. If I crush them, the Empress's father, worn out with these perpetual countermarches and the successive dilemmas confronting his army and affairs, will sign a peace within reason. If Fortune goes against me, we will carry on as in '93 until the

weary nation, ashamed of seeing its soil profaned by gangs of foreigners, rushes to arms from every side and wipes them out. Alexander thinks himself in the Capitol, but not all the Romans are at Rome; and before long the hour of deliverance may strike if I am seconded."

Such were the Emperor's feelings; I report his words. Circumstances, far from breaking down that mighty character, had roused it up. The Emperor was nothing but a general any more. Since he saw no safety except in arms, discussions of policy and affairs were tiresome to him. Finding himself situated as he was, he could see no advantage to be had as a result of negotiations, and he rejected them altogether. I returned to the attack a score of times before persuading him to seize the opportunity afforded by Wessenberg's presence to write to Metternich. I expected to get him to write to the Emperor of Austria. Beyond wishing to send those captive diplomats on their way, he would not budge. "It bothers me, having those fellows at Headquarters," he told me; "I want them off my hands. But I wish to see Wessenberg. He will have to explain various things to me about his mission to England which I have never got quite clear." The Emperor saw him, and chatted with him about the disabilities of the Châtillon conference, and how impossible it was to negotiate with an assembly of rancorous men, the majority of whom were even more hostile and less restrained than their Government. He sought to convince him that it was contrary to Austria's interest to support England's claims, the whole tendency of which was to humiliate France and, instead of pacifying the Continent, to wreck the spheres of influence that were necessary there. He made him an avowal, too, so he assured me, of his moral obligation to agree to sacrifices of a reasonable sort, and to terms that would yield an honourable peace, and consequently one that would be lasting for Europe, instead of what he called the absolute triumph of England through the ceding of Antwerp—a question that was alien, said he, to Austria, and even to Russia. I conversed with Wessenberg in the same sense, and to that end I handed him the two letters for Metternich, conveying

the assurance that the Emperor really was resigned to making the greatest possible sacrifices if there were an out-and-out desire for peace. I added that now was the moment for Metternich to prove that all his proffered good services were not just so much stage-play; and alluding to his last letter, the terms of which I reminded him of, I told him that the break-up of the Congress, by freeing us from a procedure that prevented any good from coming of it, had perhaps (using his own words to me) brought us nearer to the conclusion of peace than the sterile business of the Congress had.

The Emperor had rejected the drafts of ten letters because, even though couched in generalities, they conveyed more or less of a promise regarding his pacific inclinations and the sacrifices he was prepared to make. Finally he consented to let me enclose a quasi-confidential letter along with the official communication which he dictated. As he said, however, all those *démarches* were coming now too late, even supposing that the Emperor of Austria had not already agreed to the excluding of his son-in-law and his grandson; and so, whether by design or through force of circumstances, they remained unavailing. Everything was working to our disadvantage. Even the trifling success that we had just gained had separated the Emperor of Austria from his army. Forced to withdraw to a distance, he was out of touch with it for several days—and those few days decided the fate of France. The probability is that the Sovereigns had come to an understanding beforehand; and his presence or direct contact with his Allies would doubtless have made no difference. However, being a faithful narrator, I ought not to overlook a single circumstance enlightening to the historian who some day will confirm and correlate all these facts. I return to Paris.

And so the Royal Government was re-established in Paris, under the authority of the Lieutenant-General appointed by the Senate. The Prince of Benevento had at all times a main finger in affairs; but Messieurs Vitrolles and associates, of the Count of Artois's *entourage*, were the chief agents in fact. It was with great difficulty, and only after many a stratagem

and through the forceful, outspoken intervention of the Tsar, that I succeeded in procuring the release of the orders that were delaying the Emperor's departure.

In the afternoon of the 16th,[1] I went to call upon the Empress at Rambouillet. She received me with great kindliness, wept a good deal, and spoke long and feelingly to me of the Emperor. She was, it seemed to me, entirely prepared to fall in with his plans: to rejoin him, comfort him in his adversity, and mitigate his lot by her care for him and her eagerness to be reunited with him. Such appeared to be her desire, and her only thought. Her wish, apparently, was to go to take the waters at Aix in Savoy, and then follow him if he were obliged to set out before her. In speaking of this to me, she showed marked evidence of her willingness. Her tears, her sobs, her every word went to show me that that was her sincere desire. She had seen Metternich[2] that morning, and was expecting her father within the next forty-eight

[1] Is this date correct? In the paragraphs that follow, there is a confusion of chronological sequences which makes it very difficult to reconstruct the precise order of hours and days. The facts were these: the Emperor of Austria arrived at Paris on April 15; in the afternoon of the 16th he went to Rambouillet with Metternich, and he left there on the 17th at 9 a.m. As will be seen, Caulaincourt says that he himself went to Rambouillet on the 16th and left again that evening, after the Empress had retired. If his dating his own visit the 16th is correct, how then is one to account for the fact that he knew nothing of Francis's visit? Or that he said nothing to the Emperor about it, and that later on he notes the moment when Napoleon heard of it? Accordingly, the date he gives here cannot be accepted; and there is but one hypothesis that seems to make sense: Caulaincourt must have gone to Rambouillet on April 15. He is about to speak of events as taking place on the day which preceded the actual occurrences of the 16th. Moreover, if one accepts this hypothesis, all subsequent confusions of dating in the text resolve themselves.

[2] This detail is certainly erroneous. Metternich did not visit Rambouillet until the early afternoon of April 16, when he went there with Francis. (Queen Hortense, who had left there that morning, encountered them on their way from Paris.) Therefore he could not have seen Marie Louise in the morning, nor on the date given by Caulaincourt as that of his visit to Rambouillet, nor on the 15th, which we propose to substitute instead. The

Continued Overleaf

hours; he was due in Paris that evening or next day.[1] She told me that Metternich had tried to comfort her, speaking to her of her father's feelings and affection; and he had not objected in the least to the intentions she expressed.[2] "I am hopeful of everything," she told me, "from a father who loves me, and who surely has felt sorry, from the bottom of his heart, over the wretched circumstances we find ourselves in, and his share in the Emperor's misfortune." I talked to her about the Emperor's feelings, and his affection for her and his son, and how much he was in need of consolation. I added that he could hope for none except from her and that august child. As we spoke of things that seemed to him so precious, my tears were mingled with the Empress's. I have the presumption to say that we wept over their misfortunes and the Emperor's, while she spoke most feelingly of him. She ordered General Caffarelli to see that some of the money the Emperor needed[3] was delivered to me and some to Count Flahaut, who was there a little ahead of me, having come direct from Fontainebleau.

I went to see the King of Rome, who was taking his nap—and here too was one of my bitter moments. Mme. de Montesquiou, like a good mother,[4] never left his side, her affectionate and tender care growing only the greater in his regard as his misfortunes increased. Poor baby! One short

error possibly arose from the fact of the Empress's having discussed with Caulaincourt the letter which Metternich wrote her on April 11—the one delivered to her by Bausset, and later analysed by Méneval, *Napoléon et Marie-Louise*, II, 96.

[1] A fresh argument in support of our proposal to substitute April 15 for April 16 above. Francis was to reach Paris *that same evening* or the day after: he arrived on the 15th.

[2] In Metternich's letter of April 11 already referred to, he said that "the most suitable arrangement would no doubt be for her (Marie Louise) to go temporarily to Austria with her child, until such time as she may have her choice between whatever place the Emperor Napoleon may be in and her own establishment."

[3] See page 348, note 1.

[4] The one whom the King of Rome called his "Mama Quiou."

year ago, and he was the cynosure of every eye: not a week since, and he was the sole remaining hope of our unhappy France! What a destiny is his—and what will be his fate? All the Powers of Europe have stood to arms against his father. Alas! all is sad, all hopeless—all, at the moment when I write this, looks to my eyes as though hung with a pall of black. I reverently kissed the royal infant's hand, and so withdrew. I returned to the Empress's apartment to receive her final orders. Caffarelli had had the funds for the Emperor turned over to me;[1] and again she spoke at great length to me about His Majesty, repeating that her feelings could know no change, that she decidedly did want to rejoin him, and so on. After she had retired, I set out for Fontainebleau with Count Flahaut, whom the Emperor had despatched to her the night before.

I cannot mention that general's name without speaking of his lofty sentiments and his undeviating fine conduct towards the Emperor who, for his part, singled him out especially, and regarded him as a man qualified for every achievement. He had even been on the verge of appointing him Grand Marshal, after the Duke of Friuli's death; he had hesitated for a long while between him and Count Bertrand.[2]

The Emperor, to whom I delivered those funds, appeared to me wholly reconciled and most eager to depart. What I reported to him about the Empress, as well as what Flahaut told him, pleased him greatly. He never grew weary of talking to me about her and his son. The delayed arrival of the Emperor of Austria did not augur well. At the very least, it thwarted the departure which circumstances and the Emperor's situation rendered urgent. The Emperor sensed

[1] Caulaincourt took 209,000 francs back to Fontainebleau. (Peyrusse, *Mémorial*, proofs, 145.)

[2] As to the Emperor's consideration of Flahaut for the post of Grand Marshal of the Palace, left vacant by Duroc's death (May 23, 1813), cf. *Mémoires de la Reine Hortense*, II, 171. Napoleon's hesitation actually resulted from the thought of how much influence Hortense would be able to exert over Flahaut.

as much; and with touching consideration and thoughtfulness, he spoke of how awkward this situation was for everyone around him: for his Guard, and for the army in the midst of which he was, and where it was probable that a black mark was chalked up against anyone who showed the slightest of those proofs of attachment which, in the circumstances, it was so natural for one to give him. He would willingly have been already *en route*, and he kept repeating incessantly to me: "I am in the way; my presence amongst a lot of generals and in the midst of troops may even cause some uneasiness. . . . Why not put a stop to it?"

Worn out, and hurt by the protracted uncertainty in which he was being left, he had decided to quit Fontainebleau if the Empress's interview with her father were still further delayed; and not only that, but to start on for Saint-Tropez without her. Anxious though he was for her to rejoin him at Fontainebleau, he was determined to forego these considerations, which were a personal matter, in favour of those other considerations, public and private, of which I have just spoken; but even so, his departure no longer depended upon himself. For all the commissioners of the various Powers had not yet arrived; and the final orders, covering transfer of the Island of Elba, together with its armament and dealing with the state in which it was at the time of the treaty, had scarcely been despatched. The same was true of the corvettes. The French Government, complaining the while because the Emperor was still at Fontainebleau, had attended to none of the things that were necessary to enable him to leave there.

After having talked to me for a long while about the Empress and his son, the Emperor added: "Since I am sentenced to live, I shall write history. I will give their due to the stalwarts who have covered themselves with glory—to the men of honour who have done good service for France: I will make their names immortal. That is a debt I owe, and I will pay it." He spoke to me of his estate on the Island of Elba, and of the life he would lead there, as a private citizen might have done about his plans for going out to the country

and the ways in which he would occupy his time. That extraordinary character adapted itself to everything: first and foremost, he was the man of action—and here he was uprooting and changing his mode of life, just as only yesterday he would have shifted some part in his plan of campaign. Could the man who thus confronted and rose superior to—yes, and flung defiance at—the greatest misfortunes reserved to humanity; could such a man restrain himself and rest contented with the common lot? Never let it be said that the details I am reporting, and the conversations, were staged for mere effect. Whatever the Emperor's feelings were, he betrayed them at every pore; he was incapable of keeping up a pretence so long—and besides, what point would there have been to it? I had seen him at death's door, overwhelmed at first, and then disgusted, by the exorbitance of the misfortunes that were his. What then, was there left for him to hide from me? And what interest would I have in telling other than the truth?

That giant was human; therefore I may reveal him in every one of those aspects which he shared with our poor humanity—and that too without belittling him in the eyes of posterity, or even of such contemporaries as chance to be impartial observers.

I revert to what the Emperor said to me. Having urged me to come and see him at Elba, he continued: "What have I done for my own self? Where are my riches—my jewels? Did I have any taste of my own for ostentation and show—or for mistresses and favourites, such as the kings had? Mine was a brilliant court, because that promoted our manufactures. It was the others who were all covered with gold; the uniform of my chasseurs or my grenadiers was good enough for me. I cleared the stage of revolutions, healed up the wounds of our own, pulled the factions together, and pardoned even my assassins; I recalled the banished and kept my foes in my employ. People will be surprised to see how resigned I am, and how quietly I now propose to live. The goal of that ambition which you yourself attribute to me will no longer be the glory of this beloved France."

He spoke of the personnel of his *entourage*. He was moved by the sentiment which the virtuous Drouot, who was going with him,[1] showed in his regard; that "virtuous" is his own word for him. He praised his aides-de-camp and his orderlies, who were proving to perfection their devotion and attachment to him. He spoke to me about General Corbineau: "That," said he, "is a family of brave men;[2] I have done too little for him; he will be poor, for he has no resources at all; remind me to remember him out of the two millions that I have to dispose of."[3] He also spoke of Count Dejean: "He knows the meaning of honour, and he has character and forcefulness. If certain of the generals and marshals had had some of that same force of character, we would not be preparing now for my departure to Elba."[4] He expressed great esteem for Count Lobau: "There is no flatterer. You did not coddle me, you gentlemen," he added. "I like Maret. He has a strong attachment for me; people are unfair to him," he repeated; "the faults are all his wife's; as for him, he is a man of feeling, and is most devoted to me." He spoke to me in like terms of the Duke of Treviso: "An honest man, incapable of intrigue; I sized up his character in Paris during the Consulate." He cited his Hanoverian expedition, the Dürnstein affair, and other instances in which he had shown great

[1] Drouot accompanied Napoleon to Elba, where he served as Governor.

[2] General Count J. B. J. Corbineau had a brother who was Major of the mounted chasseurs of the Imperial Guard. Another brother, general of division and aide-de-camp to the Emperor, had been killed by a bullet at Eylau.

[3] See, in the *Correspondance de Napoléon*, 21559, the fine letter which the Emperor wrote to his aide-de-camp Corbineau. Under Article 9 of the treaty of April 11, two millions had been reserved to Napoleon for his expenditure in gratuities to his loyal *entourage*. Corbineau was, in fact, put down on the list of apportionments for 50,000 francs.

[4] Dejean, named to the Senate on February 7, 1810, upon his retirement from the War Office, had voted No to the Emperor's dethronement.

energy.[1] In speaking of the Duke of Conegliano, he said: "A man of honour, Moncey is; his behaviour towards me has been fitting and proper right to the last." He was pleased to give General Belliard[2] his due: "He is one of my faithful band of Egypt. Murat would have committed fewer follies if he had left himself to his guidance; but royalty had gone to his head." Pronouncing a fine eulogy upon the soldierly performance of generals of division whose talents he considered superior to those of the marshals, he cited among their number General Gérard. "The Army of Spain swarms with generals of high calibre," he told me. "Such men as Clauzel and Foy and some others would have risen to great heights if the war had gone on." He regarded the Dukes of Dalmatia and Albufera as possessed of outstanding military skill. "Soult is in every respect a superior man, but very ambitious. Masséna was the one whose achievements were greatest, even though his surrender of Genoa, which he got so much public honour for defending, was his biggest mistake."

He found fault with himself for having made so much use of the marshals in these latter days, since they had become too rich, too much the *grands seigneurs*, and had grown war-weary. Things, according to him, would have been in a much better state if he had placed good generals of division, with their batons yet to win, in command. He spoke of the difficulty of ruling over men and our nation, saying:

"Everything has changed from what it was twenty years ago. The world, no doubt, was old enough already, and there were a lot of fine things in the Old Régime that had been sanctified by experience, which is what governments

[1] Mortier, by order dated May 2, 1803, had been appointed to command the force put into Hanover. After capturing the Hanoverian army, he acted as administrator of that territory until February 3, 1804. On November 11, 1805, when acting commander of the Fifth Corps of the Grande Armée, he had routed Kutusof's 12,000 men with the 4000 at his disposal.

[2] General Augustin-Daniel Belliard had served as Murat's chief-of-staff, with especial distinction in the campaigns of 1805, 1806, and 1812.

ought to be guided by before all else. Along with all that, though, there was a good deal that was no longer in tune with the times, nor with our ways of doing; for the more general diffusion of prosperity, the division of property which was one of the effects of the Revolution, changed our habits entirely. What it was necessary to re-establish, I restored. To have done more would have been to jeopardize everything and spoil the effect of the whole, for too much piecing and patchwork would have destroyed the unity of the system. The best proof that I have brought everything into accord is furnished by the fact that our institutions needed only the sanction of time; that our wars and my long absences never interfered with the orderly progress of administration. Internal prosperity, trade and manufacture were ever on the increase. Time was when there used to be a lot of talk in France about liberty. Unfortunately that word long served as a cloak for licence, but nobody gives a thought to it any more because under my régime there has been as much liberty as it is necessary to enjoy—the protection of equal authority over all. Little cared I for what anyone might say or do: the door was wide open to ambition of every sort: the Vendéan, the Chouan, the revolutionary, the *émigré*, all were allowed in, all dined with Cambacérès, feeding at the same board—and all were useful to me. I felt that I was strong enough to keep everything marching on the right road because I was fair. Liberty, in the sense some men intend by it, is not pleasing to the French; quite the contrary, for what they like is power: they are courtiers by birth. No: equality is what flatters their pride: and equality is what everyone in France has. And so I have consistently respected it. Certain personages took me to task for having founded an order of nobility, and they blamed me for doing too much for it. Would it have been preferable to leave all pre-eminence to chance? Pre-eminence is requisite in a great State. Would they rather that I had left the old aristocracy the sole possessors of it? My new nobility, while serving to reward all persons of distinction, has at the same time mixed them in with the old—which is something that the Revolution and the years

that followed it were not able to effect. Such pre-eminence as this, which conveys no title to the least prerogative, harms equality not at all. Nobody is an officer or an auditor because he is a noble, but because he has come out of the Academy of Saint-Cyr or the École Polytechnique, and has had training. The preferments I granted; my institutions; the codes of law that I leave with you stand as proof that I was a respecter of equality. If I had had time to carry out my great plans, our social system would have been the wonder of our great-great-grandchildren—and their good fortune, too. Even what I do leave you will be the envy of the world, unless the Restoration sees fit to change everything. All would be lost," he concluded, "if there were any tampering with the resources of the State."

The Emperor spoke of the past, and of the men who had so greatly contributed to France's glory and his own, with as much interest as if the destiny of "this fair France," which was what he chose to call her, still rested in his hands.

This conversation was interrupted by the news that the Emperor of Austria had arrived in Paris the evening before.[1] He seemed glad to hear of this. He inferred from it that he would have news from Rambouillet during the course of the day, and so would be able to come to a decision, in which he would be guided by whatever word the Emperor of Austria might have sent to his august daughter. The Emperor was awaiting that news with keen impatience.

I had the honour of dining with him for the last time.[2] Afterwards, according to the practice that had been started some days before, he received the members of the Household and such of the marshals and generals as were still at Fontainebleau and in attendance. In that assembly he spoke just as interestedly of public affairs as if he still were ruling; and that too with such calmness, detachment, penetration, and foresight as only he was capable of in a situation like that. The

[1] April 15, 1814.

[2] April 16.

Prince of Neuchâtel,[1] the Duke of Bassano, General Belliard, several of His Majesty's adjutants-general, and some other persons were present on that day. After a discussion of current events, the Emperor spoke of the Bourbons and the means that were at their disposal for rallying opinion in support of their rule. He compared his position to theirs, and spoke of men whom he had employed, praising those by name who had done him good service and whom the new Government would be well advised to make use of, both on account of their sense of honour and because of their loyalty towards him to the very last; and he added that the public esteem in which they were held would be serviceable to the government that employed them.

"Talleyrand," he said, "was betraying me six months ago; I knew all about it; I ought to have had him arrested, but stringent measures are repugnant to me; he had served me very well before; affairs were well managed all the while I employed him. At the present moment, it is impossible to dispense with him. He has a thorough understanding of France and Europe, and, circumstances being what they are, he still is the man best qualified to pull everything together and keep everything running—unless perchance his slackness and the shiftlessness that is in his nature let the whole business get out of hand. He was under the great disability of being surrounded by nothing but schemers. It is to the interest of all of you that he should stay in office, for he is free from the prejudices that the *émigrés* have, and the men whom the King will bring back. Possibly he may even give him the right ideas about men and affairs. You gentlemen must serve the Bourbons just as faithfully as you have served me," he said, addressing his remarks to all who were in the salon. "If they are well advised, they will give their preference to you."

Then, addressing himself particularly to the Duke of Bassano and me, he repeated the same thing, as being the expres-

[1] This is an indubitable *lapsus calami*. Berthier, as above stated, had left Fontainebleau on April 13, with no intention of ever coming back.

sion of his will and desire. He afterwards directed the same statement to General Belliard individually, with a kind word for the way in which he had served him and the fidelity he had shown. The Emperor then went on to speak of how necessary it was to preserve the fusion which he had brought about between the old families and the new, and of what trouble the King would have in managing the Faubourg Saint-Germain. "The spirit of the League is still kept alive there," he said. "The Faubourg must be kept in a state of quarantine, for it is a foreign colony in the midst of France and in the very midst of Paris—a colony that cares for nothing but its own privileges and interests. Precious little concern is felt there over the interests of the country. The word patriotism has no meaning there. The elders remain feudal lords to this day. Unless the King allows them their privileges, they will love him no better than they did me, who enabled them to return to France, restored their property to them, and gave them jobs. There are certain of them, though, who served me well; and all their children have proved their mettle. This generation might have been different." The conclusion of this conversation went to the effect that, since it was all over with him, now that the enemy insisted not only upon his dethronement but also upon the rejection of the Regency in the person of his son, the Bourbon family was in all likelihood the one most acceptable to France; but they would have to give up their preconceptions. "Mine is a good bed," said he. "I made it well. All that needs changing is the sheets."

The Bourbons, he added, would have to show that they felt confidence in the civil population as well as in the military. "The Bourbons may do so without prejudice to themselves, for I came through many a difficult situation and never was betrayed until these latter days." He mentioned the necessity of forming an hereditary Chamber of Peers, to serve as a mutual guaranty between the sovereign and the nation. Such, he added, had always been his plan; he had only been waiting until there was peace. He talked of his acts of sovereignty, the principles of justice and equity of his administration, and

his impartiality. He then went on to his campaigns. He repeated that if Paris and some of the departments had been as French as Burgundy, the Franche-Comté and some other provinces, it would have been possible to retrieve everything: "Of course," he said, "people are tired of war, and I am blamed for not having made peace. It is said that I love glory; and perhaps in some respects that saying is just. However, all the wars, up to the Russian one, were solely to protect us against the aggression of our neighbours; and the Russian campaign was a matter of absolute policy; not one of them was undertaken for any reason except France's very real advantage. One day I shall receive my due. The system of perpetual warfare adopted by England was what forced me to it." He recounted what England had done to hurt the political and commercial interests of Europe; he spoke of her acts of aggression following the Treaty of Amiens; her conquests; the predominance which she exerted and wished to establish as hers by right. "A few more efforts," he added, "and we would have triumphed." He called to mind that England had been so hard pressed the summer before that she was on the point of being unable to furnish subsidies: "And," he said, "no subsidies, no coalition—and no great Continental wars."

According to the Emperor, Britain had found herself so embarrassed in her relations with the Continent that she took a loss of fifty to the hundred in her exchange when meeting the pay of her troops in Spain: "Even her gold was frozen up at home," he said; "no one ever saw anything like it. The odds in favour of selling off some products made me agree to open a channel for her specie, which poured in in such abundance that the Paris Mint did nothing but strike off napoleons out of English guineas, so common had gold become. The Russian campaign did me a great deal of harm. But for the defection that it gave rise to, and the treachery of Austria, who deserted me the moment she saw that I was in difficulties, England would have been forced to give way: she was finding herself without the means to pay her allies, and could not have borne the burden of her expenses

much longer." Thereupon he expatiated with much emphasis upon how wrong the Provisional Government had been not to take advantage of the enemies' interest in making him abdicate, and to profit by this in order to secure from them terms favourable for France. "In that way," he added, "my sacrifice would at least have led to a useful result, whereas it had been rendered a total loss to the country for which I made it. Talleyrand sacrificed France to the Bourbons. He has surrendered her up to a party conspiracy, and without so much as a guaranty, on the strength of the Tsar Alexander's honeyed words, whereas, with just a little firmness, a little skill, he might have saved her the Departments of the Rhine, and Belgium. And that is something that would even have been in the Bourbon interests, since it would have meant glory for them if they had been presented to the country with those benefits to their credit. That would have been a simple matter, since it was Russia with whom one was negotiating; and Russia had no immediate interest whatever in despoiling France or depriving her of Antwerp, once the Emperor was beside the question. Instead of that, however, one must be prepared for peace without honour, and so make ready to submit to terms imposed at the discretion of foreigners, since one has been surrendered into their hands."

He added that it should have been considered vital, right at the start, to set a date for the evacuation of territory, but that nobody had used any foresight—or rather, nobody had wished to do so. He laid great stress upon the fact that under no consideration must we surrender any of our strongholds to be held as security; it was too dangerous. Hearing how heatedly the Emperor spoke, one would have said that he was arguing in defence of his own interests. Never, certainly, in the days of his glory and good fortune, was he more absorbed with the interests of France. He spoke of the state of her finances—the best, so he said, of any in Europe: "People will be astounded to see what a thriving state they are in, once ill-feeling and passion have abated. The public debt is a trifling matter; the current deficit is merely an effect of the occupation, resulting from arrears in the tax-payments

of some departments; it will be virtually wiped out by the receipt of sums already past due." He added that the costs of the last campaign had been defrayed in large part out of savings from the Exchequer and the Extraordinary Domain; in addition to which he was leaving behind him considerable sums in State certificates and in bonds, to the amount of two millions at the very least—the increment of his personal savings; and what had been seized at Orléans was his personal property too, just as our stipends belonged to us. This conversation closed with a gracious word to the Duke of Bassano, the Duke of Taranto, and myself.

In the course of the evening, the Emperor received news from Paris and from Rambouillet which virtually deprived him of any hope that the Empress would rejoin him.[1] He sent for me to tell me the news; and he was just as truly grieved and hurt by it as if he had not had reason to anticipate that final stroke of misfortune. He felt it all the more keenly because, despite the misgivings that he had let show from time to time, it came unexpectedly, striking down his dearest hope, and was dealt by the hand he loved the best. The Empress's letters, filled as they were with avowals of tenderness and devotion, had led him to believe that he and she would be reunited. In the morning, he received more news from Rambouillet which left him no further doubt of the scheme that was afoot to prevent the Empress and his son from rejoining him. It had been her wish, for some time past, to go to Aix in Savoy and take the waters there, as the doctors had ordered her to do. Apparently, however, Austria vetoed

[1] Cf. Francis's letter to Napoleon, dated Rambouillet, April 16, as published by Masson, *L'Impératrice Marie-Louise*, 591. The Emperor of Austria's words were: "I have decided to suggest to her that she come to Vienna for a few months' rest in the bosom of her family. So great is her need of peace and quiet, and Your Majesty has shown her so many and real proofs of your attachment, that I can only believe that Your Majesty will concur with my wishes in this regard and applaud my decision." It will interest the historian to note that the original of this letter, which may be seen in Prince Victor Napoleon's files in Brussels, is written, save for the signature, in Metternich's hand.

even the carrying out of that plan, which would have brought her nearer to the Emperor. Her father insisted that first of all she should go to Vienna—nominally to Schönbrunn—the very journey to which the Emperor had declared himself opposed, ever since matters had taken their present turn. "To show the daughter of the Cæsars to the Viennese!" he said. "To let them see the Empress of the French—Napoleon's wife—and the King of Rome, son of the conqueror of Austria, fallen and cast down, dethroned by the coalition of all Europe and a father's desertion—that would be too gross an indecency." The Emperor had found this shocking in the extreme; and so those tidings gave him perhaps the most acute and poignant sorrow of any that he had yet borne. Already, moreover, those hints on the part of Austria made it possible to surmise what end she had in view. The Emperor of Austria was due to go to Rambouillet on the morrow or the day after;[1] but was it possible to hope that in that interview the Empress would cause any change to be made in a decision which, according to every indication, had been settled in advance, and to which she had already assented through the agents who had been commissioned to persuade her to do so?

If she had been capable of expressing her wishes firmly, or if she had had any such wishes to express, would it not have been far easier for her to speak her mind to her father's emissaries, and speak it more emphatically, than to her father himself . . .?

The Emperor, while trying still to keep up his hopes of a reunion in which he no longer believed, had instantly decided to set forth. Shuvalov had arrived; the Austrian commissioner was expected at any moment; only the Englishman[2] and the Prussian were behindhand. The order for the surrender of

[1] Here Caulaincourt's confusion as to dates is again apparent. Francis and Metternich were *still* at Rambouillet at the time when he represents them as being expected there.

[2] Sir Neil Campbell (1770–1827), who had been wounded at La Fère-Champenoise, March 25, 1814, and so was prevented from reaching Paris until April 9. For his account of these incidents, cf. his book, *Napoleon at Fontainebleau and Elba* (London), 1869.

the Island of Elba had just come in, but still it was not in the promised form, as guaranteed by treaty. It was therefore necessary to demand its revision. There was private information from Paris to the effect that a number of secret agents had been sent out; there was mention of a certain Maubreuil, who on that occasion achieved a notoriety as unpleasant for him as for those who hired him.[1] The word that came in from various sources served only to add to the uneasiness caused by all those intrigues. The Emperor, as I have just said, was ready and determined to leave. He longed to be on his way, but his departure did not depend upon himself, as is proven by the details I just gave, and by what follows. On the morning of the 18th, I learned that the postal agents and post-horses, assembled for the past forty-eight hours along the road he was to take, had been called in during the night, and the inspectors summoned to Paris. What was the object of this move, made without any warning? What was the intention of it? From Paris, one kept repeating "Be gone! Be gone!"—and then took away the means of departure. Did they intend to hold the Emperor? What did they propose to accomplish in that way? Was this a matter arranged with the knowledge of the Sovereigns, or was it simply a conspiracy to trick them into believing that his intentions were what his enemies would like to make out: that his departure was prevented by his own unwillingness?

It was rumoured in Paris that the Bourbons (and also Austria), finding it too disadvantageous by far to have His Majesty so close to France and Italy, had decided, at the instigation of the Duke of Otranto, to take him into custody, the intention being to transport him to some remote colony, or, according to other reports, to Russia or Prussia. We did not know what this change implied nor what interpretation to put upon it. He felt alarmed—and with good reason. His Guard was still at hand and would have shielded from outrage the hero with whom it was proposed to break faith, with the result that an armed rising would have been precipitated at that moment—and what would the outcome have

[1] Cf. Frédéric Masson, *L'Affaire Maubreuil*, 96.

been? There were, I believed, many persons on whose part all those intrigues were possible; but I was never able to convince myself that the Tsar of Russia and the Sovereigns with whom we had negotiated might fail to keep their fixed agreements: this subterfuge of the weak would not serve the purposes of the strong. That thought eased my mind a little. The Emperor took the same view. We were justified, however, in fearing the worst when there was such an array of interests against him, and consequently such a number of intrigues in progress. Even if those rumours indicated no deliberate change of Allied policy in his regard, they did give grounds for suspecting that secret plans were illicitly afoot. The Emperor concluded from this that it was vital to uncover those plots in order to defeat them; wherefore I would have to go to Paris immediately, and there remain to have everything straightened out that stood in need of correction, to assure the carrying out of agreements, and to enlighten Their Majesties about the underhand devices that were being used to prevent his departure and avoid the prompt fulfilment of the treaty.

The Emperor then urged me to be on my way again—notwithstanding which we spent another two hours, at least, in talking over the whole of his concerns. He wrote to the Duke of Cadore (who, as former intendant of the civil list, knew all about his affairs), commanding him to attend to all financial matters. He was full of anxiety and greatly moved over going away from the Empress and his son without having seen them. The conversation turned upon various topics that had been talked out time and again, but frequently he broke it off and was silent for some moments, like a man who was strongly preoccupied with something else. It appeared to me that he was extremely sad and depressed, which made our parting all the more painful for me. Alas, that parting was also a farewell, for his affairs compelled me to remain in Paris and would not allow me to go and lay before his feet one final testimony of my fealty and devotion.

I left Fontainebleau in the afternoon;[1] and that same evening

[1] April 18.

I saw certain of the foreign Ministers, who impressed me as being greatly astonished over the obstacles that were being encountered at Fontainebleau. Nobody was willing to believe that such was the case. I was unable to see the Tsar until the morrow. As we had foreseen, he attributed the whole delay to the Emperor. In the course of the day, however, came news from the Russian and Austrian commissioners confirming what I had stated. The British commissioner was ordered to Fontainebleau. The Tsar, exasperated by what I told him, gave immediate instructions to his Minister to take whatever steps were necessary to correct the orders pertaining to the Island of Elba, and to have them despatched in due form, as agreed; also, to see that the bureau of posts reorganized the relays; and lastly, to have all this performed in better faith. Everything came through to Fontainebleau on the 19th, during the evening, and the Emperor made ready to leave on the 20th.

I was outspoken with the Tsar over what had taken place, and I made no effort to hide my misgivings from him. I called his attention to the discredit that would be reflected upon him, upon the Allies as a whole, and upon France if anything were to happen to the Emperor; and on that score I found him as outraged as myself by the thought of all the attempts that could be made against a prince who had entrusted himself to Their Majesties' good faith. "Shuvalov is answerable for his safety with his own life," was the first thing he said, adding that he would positively compel the French Government to execute the treaty without delay; that he pledged his own honour for it, and the honour of them all. Assuring me that he felt precisely as I did, he set my mind at rest, his remarks running to this effect: he had made himself understood in accordance with my point of view, and in the most positive fashion; from the steps he had ordered taken and the displeasure he had shown on account of the impediments raised and the conspiracies I complained of, it was plain for me to see that he by no means sanctioned the latter; he had given his word, and would stand by it; the

[1] *April 19.*

assigning of Shuvalov, who was our own first choice and whose scrupulous integrity and tact I was acquainted with, was my assurance that he, Alexander, wished the Emperor to enjoy the full protection and every courtesy to which he was entitled; Shuvalov was aware that his life was forfeit to the Emperor's safety; this he was telling me for the second time, and I was at liberty to convey this assurance to the Emperor, which he hoped would relieve my mind. While talking thus, he sent for Nesselrode and ordered him again to come to an understanding with me, confer with the French Government, and demand that everything be observed to the letter.

Meanwhile, the Emperor of Austria went to Rambouillet[1] and the Empress expressly promised her father to go to Austria for the time being. As yet there was no talk of the fact that she would not go to Parma, would be forbidden to go to Elba, or that a promise would be extracted from her to have no further correspondence or contact with her husband. It was easy to foresee, however, that, after having reduced the Emperor Napoleon's wife to so submissive a state and having thus triumphed over the Emperor Francis's religious and proper scruples, the Austrian Cabinet would not stop there, that the son would be forever parted from his father, the wife from her husband, at the very moment when he stood most in need of consolation. The Empress was given to understand that perhaps later on it might be permissible for her to go drink the waters at Aix, and thence proceed to Parma: but if Metternich or her father held this out by way of consolation to her, it left no grounds of hope either to the Emperor or to clear-sighted men.

On the 19th I exchanged ratifications with Prussia.[2] The Royal Government's assent to the treaty of April 11 still encountered difficulties of every sort. The desire was that I

[1] Here again is a consequence of the error noted above, p. 365, note 1. Francis had gone to Rambouillet on April 16.

[2] The original of this ratification, signed and sealed by Frederick William and counter-signed by Hardenberg, is in the *Archives de Caulaincourt*, file 13.

should rest content with the surety afforded by the ratifications of all the Powers of Europe. It was intimated to me that I ought not to insist; that to do so was not helpful to the Emperor; and that such assent, which would confer a measure of recognition upon what had gone before, would be supremely distasteful to the King. Already, so it was hinted, I had incurred displeasure by insisting so strenuously upon a point which I might just as well overlook: the obligations that were incumbent upon France, and which the Sovereigns had guaranteed for good measure, would, lacking the Royal assent, be punctually fulfilled. . . . My duty was to obtain every possible assurance for the Emperor; and so it was apparent to me that the most indispensable guaranty of all was that of the French Government, which was to provide both him and his family with living expenses, and whose fleet would at every moment be in a position to molest him. Therefore, letting myself be checked not at all by the annoyance that might be deflected against myself, I insisted that this stipulation be fulfilled. As for the Emperor, he was momentarily of the opinion that it was most imperative to have England's assent before his departure, and he urged that I do my utmost to forward it to him. However, it did not arrive until later.

His journey still caused me the liveliest anxiety. All the delays to which he had been subjected made me fear that perhaps there had been some violence planned in the Midi, or that gangs were being assembled there to harass him. After having confided my fears to the Tsar, I discussed them with Metternich, remarking that his Government, more than any other, was in honour bound to watch out for the Emperor's safety. He answered me like a man who, in that particular, thought precisely as I did; and he gave me his assurance that the Emperor of Austria's principles could leave me in no uncertainty whatever as to the tone and the course that his Cabinet had set and would pursue in that respect, or as to the measures they had advocated in so far as it lay within their power to do so. "I do not know," he told me, "whether the decision that has been made is the best one, even for the

Emperor Napoleon—let alone for us. One thing, however, is certain: the Emperor of Austria has undertaken certain obligations, and he will abide by them." I sent the Emperor a report of all that had taken place, and of what I had been told.

On the 20th, the Emperor had the Guard mustered in the Cheval Blanc courtyard and bade them farewell.[1] After that address, which was at once pathetic and forceful, he ordered the Eagle to be brought to him, kissed it, got immediately into his carriage, and set out for Saint-Tropez. That was a touching farewell: those grizzled warriors, who many a time had watched unmoved while their own blood ran down, could not keep back their tears when they saw their Emperor, their general, their father departing from them. All eyes were wet—nor was there ever a farewell that led to weeping more unfeigned. . . . The Duke of Bassano, and the whole of the personnel that had been able to stay with the Emperor until the last moment, came back to Paris. During those final moments, the Emperor had been resigned and self-possessed. He had set off before it could be ascertained for sure whether the relays and all the other details necessary to his voyage were in order; so impatient was he to be on his way. And when he wanted some little pictures, which the Empress had painted and he had left behind in his apartment, he told me to ask for them. They were released; but the small library of books which he also laid claim to was refused. The Government seized everything, disregarding the fact that the Emperor ought to have been reimbursed for the furniture, which had been purchased out of his own pocket.

The Emperor deigned to write me on April 20, when he was about to leave Fontainebleau. He announced his departure, and informed me that he took with him the recollection of my loyalty.[2]

[1] April 20, 1814, 12 noon.

[2] "*From Fontainebleau, the 20th April*, 1814.—I am on my way to spend the night at Briare, whence I shall leave to-morrow morning without further stop until Saint-Tropez. I treasure the recollection of every proof of that attachment which you have

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And so that great, that wretched event, the abdication, drew to a close. The Royal Government's assent to the treaty of April 11 was still to come; I encountered the same difficulties as before, but would not be rebuffed. And as before, I cared for nothing but the Emperor's interests, and his family's. The Grand Marshal and I, in collaboration at Fontainebleau, had made out the schedule according to which His Majesty wanted his two millions distributed. The only names lacking from that list were those of certain squadron commanders and members of his Household who went with him, and which he later sent me a memorandum of.[1]

On the 21st La Bouillerie, Custodian of the Crown, gave me receipt for the contents of the two chests containing the Crown diamonds which the Emperor had ordered me to withdraw and turn over to the Government.[2] The other chest was delivered at first hand by the personage to whom I presented His Majesty's order to do so. The several accountings required to cover the different items of the Extraordinary Domain, the civil list, and the various Ministries were furnished by the Ministers involved and the several heads of administration, as they came into Paris one by one, thus relieving me of the responsibility that I had been forced to assume at the time of signing the treaty.

On the 21st I had received a letter from the Empress, dated

lately shown me; and I am grateful. Let the Duke of Cadore have your support in all his future attention to my affairs; write to me sometimes; and never doubt as to the sentiments of esteem and friendship which I feel for you. With which, my dear Duke of Vicenza, I pray that God may have you in his holy keeping.—Napoleon."

For the original copy of this letter, see the *Archives de Caulaincourt*, file 13.

[1] For the personnel here involved, see the list given by Fain, *Manuscrit de* 1814, 413.

[2] In the *Archives de Caulaincourt*, file 13, may be seen La Bouillerie's receipt for "chest bearing the number 3 . . . bound and sealed with the seal of the Crown Treasurer."

from Rambouillet the 20th; and I append it here.[1] Everything that that unhappy princess went through was so well set forth therein; her high resolve to rejoin the Emperor was so well presented; the perplexity she felt in consequence of the promise, exacted from her by her father, that she would go at that moment to Vienna—all this was so apparent in that letter, and it so triumphantly refutes those who would like to make believe, by insinuation, that the Empress did not love the Emperor, and that she sought only to escape him! The Emperor having entrusted all of that princess's letters to me, I can certify that they are all in the same vein as this one; that they express the truest affection and devotion, the noblest and tenderest of sentiments. I had the opportunity of seeing the Empress again. Alas, it lay no more in her power than in mine to obtain permission for her to go and comfort her husband. She was dejected and extremely sad. Here is what I saw and can affirm, as indeed I should. Young as this princess was; accustomed to receiving guidance, nay, to living

[1] "*Rambouillet, April* 20, 1814.—My lord, the frankness with which you spoke to me the other day, and the feeling for me that you showed, move me to ask you to set me right on a number of doubts that trouble me. You know that to-morrow I must start for Austria. What I am afraid of is that they will want to keep me a prisoner there for the rest of my life and will not let me go to Aix, the watering place in Savoy, which is the only way for me to get my health back and be nearer the Emperor, whom I am most anxious presently to rejoin. If you can possibly find out what M. de Metternich means to do in this regard, you will be doing me a great service. But I do especially urge you to point out to him how important I think it is for me to drink the waters. The Emperor has just sent me word by M. Anatole (Montesquiou) that he wants me to go there at once. The only thing is that I'm afraid that I have already promised my father too much to be able to get his permission to do so. If you can find me any way of doing it, do be so kind as to send me word. I value your opinion so highly, and the loyalty you have ever shown towards the Emperor and myself, that I do not think there is anyone in a better position to advise me than you are.

"Please give your mother my kindest regards. She is one of the people to whom I regret not being able to pay my adieux. With which I beg you to remain assured of those sentiments in which I shall ever rest.—Louise."

in a state of utter dependence; and now left, under such grave circumstances, to her own discretion and the powerful influence of a Court which, it goes without saying, preferred Vienna to Elba as a place of residence and the Empress's sweet reasonableness to the stern etiquette which the Emperor insisted on—is it, I ask, any wonder that she should allow herself to be guided by the Austrian Cabinet, and should give in to the wishes of a parent whom she fondly loved and, since childhood, had grown but to respect the more because she had so often heard the Emperor speak so highly of the moral qualities and sentiments of his father-in-law? What I can and must bear witness to is this: tha regardless of the store the Emperor set by having his wife rejom him, the comfort he might have found from having his son beside him, and the importance which, quite properly, he might attach to having the Empress accompany him for his personal safety's sake, never once did he seek to influence her decision. In this instance, he felt his misfortunes and his downfall more keenly on her account than his own; and so he chose to throw himself wholly upon her affections by leaving her free to do as she saw fit and to make whatever choice would, in her judgement, best console her for the loss that he was only too well aware she had sustained. . . .

The Empress departed from Rambouillet on the 23rd, and slept that night at Grosbois. She did not enter Paris: she was nevermore to see that city, where she left so many memories behind her. As she drove around its walls, what must her feelings have been! What indeed, as she recalled how the populace within had shown the same enthusiasm over her and her son, three months ago, that the loyal Hungarians had paid to her grandmother Maria Theresa. The same enthusiasm, yes, but not the same constancy, when they swore to that Imperial child, with whom she was returning to Austria, that they would lay down their lives in defence of his rights and the interests of his country. The misfortunes of a single day had been enough to wipe out the memory of that oath. How different would have been her destiny and ours if the Empress had remained in Paris! How very different, if her

proclamation saying: "My son had no such hold on all your hearts in the days of our prosperity as he has now, when his person and his rights depend on your protection,"[1] had not been issued from Blois on April 3, but posted up in Paris on March 30! Then the foe would not have dared attack it; the National Guard and the whole citizenry would have been fired, like the army, with an equal zeal; and every citizen, proud to think that an exalted princess was relying on him, would have called his oath to mind and remembered his duty to the Emperor. The enemy's proclamations of revolution would not have soiled the walls of Paris; and our strongholds would not have been profaned to make a triumph for those foreign hordes which had grown so long accustomed to fleeing before our Eagles. Here it was only April 25; yet a fortnight had already passed since the Parisians had sworn another allegiance, and the National Colours had been replaced with the white cockade. Was it the citizens of Paris who ought to be held accountable for so sudden a transformation? If I may judge in the light of what I learnt at the time, and of all the particulars that I have gathered since, it was the Emperor who harmed himself and his cause beyond repair. Mistrustful of the capital that might be made, for partisan purposes, of the presence of the Empress and his son, and being ready to suspect his relations and everybody else rather than believe in his own misfortune, the Emperor brought about through his own action the very peril which he had sought to avoid. . . .[2] If the Empress and the King of Rome had remained in Paris, the Emperor's fate would certainly have been nowhere near so unhappy as it was. What opportunities their presence there would have left open to him; or, viewing it in the worst

[1] This is a literal translation of the proclamation which was signed by Marie Louise at Blois on April 3, and posted there on April 7. Cf. G. B. G. Fabry ("*Un Habitant de Paris Réfugié à Blois*"), *La Régence à Blois*, Paris, 1814.

[2] The allusion here is to Napoleon's letter of March 16, 1814 (*Correspondance de Napoléon*, 21497), to Joseph, providing for the evacuation of Paris by the Regency Government in the event that further defence of the capital seemed impracticable.

light, if that course had been taken, what opportunities it would have left open to his son. Unquestionably, their presence would have assured him of the twelve-hours' margin which was what cost him his fortune. And there was the crux of the whole matter; for then everyone in the capital, citizens and soldiers alike, would have sought to outdo one another in the bravery and devotion with which they defended the heir to France's glory—and after a few hours, the Emperor's voice and his electrifying presence would have been the rallying sign.

It is simply incalculable what the enthusiasm of a valiant and generous people might have accomplished if a brave mother had held up before them the Imperial child whom they were in honour bound by the recollection of so much hope and glory to defend. Everyone would have died at the post of honour rather than let the enemy inside the capital. And the Emperor, who was so close at hand, would have arrived in time to rally all their hopes and re-enforce their courage. The most trifling circumstances have so powerful an effect upon the greatest events that it is needless here to go into the consequences that might have followed from that courageous resolution, so worthy alike of our country, of that exalted princess who was leaving us, of that royal child whom we lost, and of the Emperor, who, despite all his reverses, can never be forgotten for his victories and the services he rendered his country. However, that same fatal influence which had guided the Emperor's decisions for some time past, had driven him on to encompass his own destruction. As if by magic, his genius had re-established the social order upon its proper bases; and it was that same genius alone which could destroy itself and restore the Bourbons. France's last hour of glory had struck when his expired; and his destiny and ours were achieved together.

When we reflect that Talleyrand, who had just caused the revolution of March 31 and brought back the Bourbons, had also held out with all his might in the last council meeting, and virtually alone, against the Empress's departure from Paris, how are we to know what to judge men by, or what inter-

pretation to put upon events? Are we to regard his opinion, the advice he gave, and his tenacity on the 29th[1] as so much stage-play, intended to leave him grounds for defending himself in the event that certain other intrigues, in which he may have been plotting, were discovered? Was he acting in good faith on the 29th—or was it not until the 31st that he decided in favour of recalling the Bourbons? Was the Regency what he really wanted, as many persons believe, and as several remarks that are attributed to him might lead one to think? But if so, how was that to be accomplished with the Emperor, at the head of the army, knocking at the gates of Paris? Such reflexions as these prevent my forming a judgement in the matter: I register my doubts, pending the time when persons who were better informed of the events and more closely in touch with the intrigues of that epoch may help me to clear them up.

I had the honour of seeing the Empress at Grosbois, and of spending the day with her there.[2] Her situation was all the more painful because she retained but little hope of rejoining the Emperor. Her father, however, allowed her to flatter herself with the idea that she would go to Aix and Parma, and that from thence she would be able to convey to her husband the consolation which, as she knew, he so badly needed. I had the honour, too, of seeing the King of Rome, who already was so engaging. Words cannot tell how heartsick I was that day. . . . The Empress left for Vienna on the morrow,[3] accompanied by the Duchess of Montebello, Countess de Brignole, Count Caffarelli, and Messieurs

[1] The Regency Council meeting was held at 8 p.m. of April 28.

[2] Marie Louise arrived at Berthier's château at Grosbois in the evening of April 23, and spent the following day there. "During that princess's brief residence at Grosbois, she gave audience to a number of personages who came down from Paris to bid her farewell. When the last of them had withdrawn, Marie Louise felt herself so much alone that she must have realized that the last tie uniting her with France had been severed." (Méneval, *Napoléon et Marie-Louise*, II, 119.)

[3] March 25, 1814.

Saint-Aignan and Bausset.[1] Countess de Montesquiou, like a second mother, never left the side of the Imperial child who was being snatched away from his father.

The instrument signifying England's agreement to the treaty was finally delivered to me on the 27th. The Emperor had always attached so much importance to it that I held it for transmission to him by a trusty means.[2] The French Government's adherence presented the same difficulties as before. In vain I urged the Allied Ministers, who stood sponsor for the carrying out of the treaty. Austria, who had taken no part in the transactions until it came to the signature, saw fit and proper to throw all these details back at Russia, by whom the negotiations had been conducted. The Prince of Benevento kept repeating that the concurrence in question was implicit in the one the Provisional Government had given in exchange for the abdication, and that in it, together with the subsequent ratifications furnished by the Powers, the Emperor would find every guaranty that was required. Any direct action on the part of the Royal Government, said Talleyrand, that served to recognize or mention the Emperor Napoleon, would, even though addressed to the Allied Powers, be distasteful to the King and prejudicial to the rights of his dynasty. The steady opposition I encountered not only served to show me what importance was attached to that document, but warned me how important it might be to the Emperor later on. Far from giving way, therefore, I insisted on the performance of that agreement, which, so it seemed to me, was doubly necessary as a future precaution in view of the fact that the Royal Government, on the very grounds that made it unwilling to recognize the authority wielded by the sovereign who preceded it, might also refuse later on to consider itself bound in his respect by virtue of an act undertaken by this Provisional Government, holding power for a fortnight. Fresh representations were made to me, hinting, in

[1] Add Méneval to this list.

[2] This document is missing from the *Archives de Caulaincourt*. Further on, the Duke of Vicenza says that he sent it to Napoleon on May 28.

every possible way, that I ought to desist for my own good; but since, as duty required, I was concerned solely with the good of the Emperor, I petitioned the Tsar once more. At that moment they were putting the last touches to the treaty of peace and evacuation. Their Majesties might leave at any time, and there was not a minute to be lost. The Tsar promised me that he would have his Minister take action, in accordance with the terms agreed on, and see to it that the French Government's assent was delivered to me.

However, more time elapsed. On May 31 was signed the treaty under which France was despoiled of everything she had acquired during the past thirty years[1]—and still that instrument of accession was nowhere in sight. The Sovereigns were on the eve of quitting Paris. I reminded the Tsar of his word of honour and the promises he had made; and that Prince, whose sense of the right thing to do was never open to question for a moment after the signing of the treaty, told me that he would not leave Paris until I had received satisfaction and the agreement, which he had promised me I was to have, had been delivered to me. He kept his word; and on the morrow, May 31, Nesselrode officially communicated to me the note from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in which the Royal Government promised to fulfil every stipulation of the treaty of April 11.[2]

It was thus with no little pain that I procured that document, upon which (if one were acting in good faith) the Emperor's future lot and his comfort depended. The Government had let me feel its displeasure at my insistence in more ways than one; but I had done my duty and was satisfied.

Upon his arrival at the point of embarkation, the Emperor had been good enough to notify me of his going aboard. He wrote me through Count Bertrand, who sent me a letter by the hand of one of the Allied commissioners who was returning to Paris. On several occasions, too, I had had news of his progress through the reports received by the Government

[1] By the Treaty of Paris, May 30, 1814, between France and the Allied Powers.

[2] This note appears farther on.

and transmitted to the Allied Sovereigns; the Tsar had the extreme kindness to impart their contents to me. Except in the Midi, where some riotous subjects raised a few shouts of seditious anger, the journey had gone off well. The Emperor had been greeted everywhere else with interest, often enthusiastically, and always with affection.[1] The commissioners had behaved perfectly at Orgon. Shuvalov was the first to confront the rioters. The Emperor slipped into the Austrian general's great-coat, mounted a pony, and rode forward; and thus he escaped that ambush. The leaders of the mob, not finding him in the carriages where the more foolhardy searched after him, and not daring to offer violence to the foreign uniforms, at length permitted the carriages to start on. This scene was repeated once more at another relay, but without so much violence.[2]

Since the French brigs were not yet in the anchorage when the Emperor reached the port,[3] he embarked on the British frigate that was waiting for him, and that took him to Elba.[4] He was received aboard with all possible deference and respect, and treated with all the care that was his due. Montcabrié, who arrived with the French vessels at the moment when the Emperor was embarking, went with him and took a portion of his suite in charge.[5]

[1] According to Thiers, Napoleon was hailed with cheers as far as the centre of the Bourbonnais. Between Moulins and Lyons the populace showed curiosity and nothing more. Beyond Valence, the shouts of "*Vive le Roi*" came thick and fast.

[2] "And thus (by Napoleon's disguise) the crowd was cheated at Saint-Canet, where the unruliness was fully as great as that which we had lately witnessed, to our sorrow." (Peyrusse, *Mémorial et Archives*, 226.) At Calade, says Peyrusse, the Emperor got into General Koller's carriage and donned the Austrian's cap. It was possibly this procedure that led to Caulaincourt's confusion as to detail of the costume Napoleon assumed at Orgon.

[3] Saint-Raphael. April 28.

[4] H.M.S. *Undaunted*, Captain Usher.

[5] Montcabrié, commanding the frigate *Dryade*, with the brig *Inconstant*, Captain Charrier-Moissard, under his orders, had been ordered from Toulon to Saint-Tropez by Baron Moulet, Minister

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After leaving the Emperor, I had been continuously occupied in taking care of his affairs and the interests of his family, notably those of the Empress Josephine, which encountered many obstacles. There was also the Queen of Holland, who was anxious to make arrangements that would permit her to live in France so as to have her children educated there.[1] In all these instances, the Tsar was a helpful defender and support. His intervention enabled me to triumph over all obstacles, and it was to him that those princesses owed the interim arrangements assuring them of an honourable, proper, and tranquil existence. The good Empress Josephine got all too little benefit of it: death tore her away, only a few days afterwards, from the tender care of a family that adored her, from the host of friends who never had forgotten her unfailing kindness, and, one might say, from the affections of France, which will never forget that no misfortune ever appealed to her in vain.[2] Her death was an occasion of public grief; but that princess viewed its approach with resignation and without complaint. A few hours before she breathed her last, she told me once again that she had forgotten the Emperor's desertion, remembering only the

of Marine. He was to proceed thence to Fréjus, but Napoleon had already embarked on the *Undaunted*. Despite what Caulaincourt says, Montcabrié did not accompany Napoleon, but took his two ships back to Toulon. Cf. Pons de l'Hérault, *Souvenirs et anecdotes de l'île d'Elbe*, 132.

[1] Cf. *Mémoires de la Reine Hortense*, II, 239.

[2] Josephine died at Malmaison on May 29, 1814. Caulaincourt alone informed Napoleon of her death, in the following letter (*Archives de Caulaincourt*, file 13, draft): "*June* 2, 1814.—Sire, the Empress Josephine, who had scarcely fallen ill, has just been carried off in a few hours by a putrid fever. The Viceroy and the Queen (Hortense) will advise Your Majesty of this directly. I had the honour of seeing her several times, and in her last moments as well. Her last prayers were for Your Majesty, of whom she often spoke to me with all the feeling of a heart which misfortune had not changed in the least. This is a cause of general grief, but more especially to those who, having had the honour of access to Her Majesty, have likewise so frequently been privileged to experience her affecting kindliness."

proofs of his attachment; and that she could cling to life no longer, knowing how unhappy he was, and that she was powerless to go and comfort him.

In addition, I had procured passports for Countess Bertrand, who was bravely going to join her husband at Elba. I took advantage of that opportunity to write to the Emperor, under dates of May 28 and June 2,[1] and send him the British Government's agreement to the treaty of April 11, and the Royal Government's, which I had just then received. . . . In order not to deal directly with the Emperor Napoleon or his plenipotentiary, they had addressed the latter to Russia.[2] Since that formality served in a measure to guarantee it, I was only too pleased, of course, to have it so. (According

[1] "*June* 2, 1814.—Sire, at long last I have the honour to send Your Majesty the Government's accession to the treaty of April 11. This note has been sent round to the plenipotentiaries of all the Powers. The Minister of Finance is attending to the arrangements that are to be made in regard to fulfilment of the stipulations, France having assumed responsibility for the making of all payments. Now that I have done everything that lay in my power for Your Majesty's interest and your family's, I am withdrawing from all affairs and retiring to the country. I say nothing to Your Majesty of what I have been through. You alone are in a position to judge me, and one day perhaps to justify me in the eyes of History. Your Majesty knows whether I have merited such defence. I am, Sir, Your Majesty's most humble, most respectful servant."

[2] The text, after a copy in the *Archives de Caulaincourt*, file 13, is as follows:

"Paris, 30*th May* 1814.—The undersigned, Minister and State Secretary to the Department of Foreign Affairs, having reported to the King about the demand which Their Excellencies the Plenipotentiaries of the Allied Courts have been ordered by their Sovereigns to make, relative to the treaty of April 11 to which the Provisional Government acceded: it has pleased His Majesty to authorize the undersigned to declare in His Majesty's name that the clauses of that treaty binding upon France will be faithfully executed. He has the honour, therefore, to declare as much through the present note to His Excellency Count Nesselrode, State Secretary and Plenipotentiary of His Majesty the Tsar of All the Russias. He begs His Excellency to accept every assurance of his very high regard. (Signed) Benevento. Cf. *Archives des Affaires étrangères, Mémoires et Documents*, France, 1814.

to protocol, since France was employing an intermediary between the Emperor Napoleon and herself, that instrument should have been addressed to all the Powers involved in the treaty of April 11.) I was obliged, also to fulfil the sad and painful duty of notifying the Emperor of the Empress Josephine's death.[1]

My contacts with all the foreign cabinets, during the course of my attention to the Emperor's interests, gave me an opportunity of seeing the Emperor of Austria, who received me with distinguished courtesy. He spoke to me of the course of politics since Prague, telling me that I had had proof there of the confidence I inspired him to feel in me—and of the fact that it had not been within his power to make the Emperor Napoleon conclude an honourable peace. He had urged him many a time, and in every way possible, to make such a peace, predicting to him what must be the consequences of a war which, since the Russian disaster, had become pointless. In recent days, he went on, he had once more insisted on an armistice as the sole means of reaching that same peace, which could never be reached at Châtillon so long as the fighting continued; and he had done all he could to save the Emperor; but the latter had rejected every effort, refusing the soundest advice, the most affectionate admonitions, and driven on, apparently, by some fatality; and so he had brought things to such a pass that Austria, once she realized that there was no other means of bringing him back to common-sense notions and enlightening him about his own peril, had been compelled to let policy take its course. He added that at the time when he gave him his daughter in marriage, he had done so solely in the hope that that union's future and children of his own would inspire and bring him back to thoughts of peace and tranquillity. That hope, however, had been ill-founded; and the fact of his ambition had been proven all too clearly since his refusal of peace at Prague. Even so, it had cost him, Francis, great pain to make a decision that must necessarily grieve his daughter so badly and leave his grandson stripped of everything; but his people's welfare, and the

[1] Cf. page 395, note 2.

interests of Europe, and even of France had made it his duty to sacrifice his affections, the affection he felt for the Emperor, and even his own family's interests in the interest of world peace. He would do all that lay in his power to ease the Emperor's lot; by no means, if his daughter wanted to rejoin the Emperor, would he oppose her wishes; and in him his grandson would always find the care and the feelings of a good father. Never, though, would he do anything that was contrary to the interests of his people and of Europe; and those interests demanded that the Emperor Napoleon take no further part in world affairs.

The Emperor of Austria added some gracious things about the reputation I had made for myself in public affairs; about my efforts for peace, my loyalty to the Emperor in these latter days, and the pains I had spent over the interests of the Empress and his grandson. To have shown attachment to persons who were so dear to him was, he added, the same as showing attachment to him personally; he could never forget it; and if the opportunity should occur for doing me any favours, he could assure me that he would seize it gladly.

The King of Prussia, whom I saw some days later, told me that the Emperor had no one but himself to blame for his misfortunes; but as for himself, he had acted without animus in the last campaign and the settlement of affairs, even though Prussia had been treated worse than any by the Emperor. It had been entirely for the Emperor to make peace; the King of Prussia, he could assure me, honestly desired it, had borne not the slightest grudge against the Emperor, and had proven as much in the late negotiations—his decision having been dictated solely by the interests of Europe. To this he added some kind remarks about me.

And so ended that painful mission. The kindliness with which I was honoured by the Tsar of Russia was a great help to me; he alone supported me, seconded me, and was, I am free to say, the champion of the unfortunate, once matters had been decided. At any hour and at all times, his kindliness led him to receive my protests with unvarying goodwill, never allowing him to regard my zeal as inordinate, for all

that I was compelled to return to the charge time and again.

Unquestionably that Prince did us great harm: it was his policy that dethroned the Emperor at Paris. After having hindered the negotiations at Châtillon, he took vengeance like an angry sovereign and a spiteful man. After the terrible outcome, however,—after the abdication, which cost France so many sacrifices and the Imperial dynasty the throne—his faithfulness to his word, the firmness with which he demanded that promises, once again, should be kept, and his naturally obliging disposition assured Elba to the Emperor, and the other provisions, too. Without the Tsar, that would all have slipped away.

During his stay in Paris, he was especially kind to me; and after matters had been settled he showed me every sign of concern, and I venture even to say of friendship and regard, that he possibly could. He went to call on my mother, and on Mme. de Canisy, whom I was about to marry. I had the privilege of dining with him on numerous occasions, and among others on the day when he received the Princes of France. In vain I begged him to excuse me since I had not yet been presented to the Count of Artois. He insisted, saying to me: "It is my wish that everyone shall know how much I esteem you, and how attached I am to you." I asked for an audience with his Royal Highness. It was first granted and then postponed—or refused, rather; but he finally condescended to receive me.

After the King's return, I had the honour of being presented to His Majesty, along with a large number of my colleagues and other officials who had returned to Paris.

We had come to the [1] of June. The foreign Monarchs, whose departure had been announced long before, set forth at last. The Tsar had been displeased for some time with the course affairs were taking, and he no longer wished to see Talleyrand, who, in his position as chief of State, was giving full rein to the passions of the party that had taken power on the King's return and was nothing but his tool.

[1] Left blank in the manuscript.

The Tsar was impatient to leave France. The charter that was granted, the appointments made, the exclusions decreed, the preferences awarded—everything was exactly opposite to what had been announced and promised; and the Court was keeping none of the agreements or pledges that had been made by Talleyrand, the author and chief actor of the Restoration, and for which the Tsar had more or less stood sponsor.

This behaviour was extremely embarrassing to the Tsar, since it made him the butt of every protest. And since he was a slave to his word of honour, the course things were taking hurt him; and he was all the more embarrassed by it because his fineness of feeling and his respect for the King prevented him from taking a hand in matters after His Majesty's return. He was too enlightened not to see all the dangers of the reaction that was in the making, and what difficulties it must infallibly entail for the dynasty which he had just re-established; and this grieved him. Talleyrand, so daring and outspoken in the day of peril, so fell away after the battle that his weakness compromised everything. Carried away by the faction that controlled him, occupied solely with his personal interests, and hoping perhaps to get everything in hand again after that moment of excitement had passed, he seemed, for the time being, to have forgotten all his obligations, while abandoning the men and the interests which he might otherwise have been able to protect.

With his principles, the Tsar could find no explanation for anyone's giving way thus, even momentarily; nor could he understand how obligations and interests of so high an order could be sacrificed for the sake of private considerations. He was so badly hurt by that breach of trust that the reconciliation for which Talleyrand begged became impossible; and despite his importunities, the Tsar left Paris without caring to receive him.[1] On the day of his departure, he dined at Saint-Leu. He spent the day there with Queen

[1] Alexander did, as a matter of fact, leave Paris without seeing Talleyrand, who wrote him the long letter published in his *Mémoires*, II, 210.

Hortense,[1] and thence departed at ten in the evening for Calais, and so to England.

All that was of interest to the Emperor being now at an end, I left for the country. The most suitable course, it seemed to me, was to live in retirement from public affairs, after having played so active a part in the whole of French policy for several years past. I could very well have gone abroad: Austria and Prussia would have given me a friendly reception. The Tsar of Russia was so kind as to assure me that in his empire I would enjoy the rank and the consideration to which, by reason of what my position there had been, I was entitled. However, to go and live amongst the enemies who had just imposed such harsh terms upon my country, overthrown the Sovereign whom I had served, and dethroned his dynasty, was, it seemed to me, unworthy of my character. I chose rather to dwell in my own land, beneath the burden of a gross injustice—the Royal Government having seen fit to exclude me from the Chamber of Peers at the time of its organization, although as Senator, and on many a score besides, I was rightfully a member of it. The Sovereigns, who had hailed me at Frankfort as "the man of peace," would all have protested on my behalf if I had asked for their intervention; but I made not the slightest protest, and I would have considered it beneath my dignity to avail myself of their support.[2]

[1] "The Tsar's intervention enabled her to obtain the letters patent raising Saint-Leu to a duchy. Tracts of woodland were added to it to make up the revenue to which, under the treaty of April 11, she was entitled; and this gave her and her children a suitable fortune in France, and the assurance that the Restoration would not force them to leave Paris." (*Caulaincourt's note.*) Actually, Hortense gained nothing more than the Royal rescript of May 30 creating the Duchy of Saint-Leu; and this order never was confirmed by letters patent. Cf. *Mémoires de la Reine Hortense*, II, 252.

[2] "He (Alexander) had also expressed a desire that the duke be included in the Chamber of Peers; and when the Ministers with whom he had discussed this replied that they were unable to obtain it from the King, he had shown an inclination to speak of it direct to him, but had not dared to do so." (De Viel-Castel, *Histoire de la Restauration*, I, 442.)

For me there can be no pardon because, by my efforts at Châtillon and Paris, I made it seem doubtful whether the Bourbons would get back; because, as it was my duty and my mission to do, I strove against Restoration; because I upheld the Imperial dynasty and defended the Emperor's ultimate interests until the very last. Such rancour can only do me credit, and it is with considerable pride that I accept the penalties and the consequences.

By way of explaining the injustice that was done me, they have sought to impute to me the Duke of Enghien's arrest. The orders that were given me at the time, sending me to Strasbourg, and everything that has since been published concerning that fatal, miserable affair, have proven to the satisfaction of fair-minded men that that allegation is a falsehood. But what if it were true? Take M. de Miossans, who later became Marshal d'Albret: was he disgraced for having arrested the great Condé? Or Count Fuensaldaña, who arrested Charles IV, Duke of Lorraine: was he proscribed for it? However, to attempt to convince those whose only passion is spite, and who see an enemy in everyone who was not of their camp, is so much trouble wasted. The proof that the Duke of Enghien's tragic end has been used as a mere pretext for mistreating me, is this: that it has not served to debar from the highest offices, including even the intimate service of the King, those who, on account of their position and their duties, were compelled at that time to take a far more substantial rôle in that sorry event than the one which it is sought to attribute to me.

As his Captain of the Guards, the King has that marshal, that worthy man, who signed the order for the Duke of Enghien's arrest and delivered it direct to General Ordener—meanwhile sending me, for an entirely different purpose, to Strasbourg and to Offenburg.[1] The police reports, which were contributory to the Prince's arrest, came through the hands of the first Inspector-General of Gendarmerie; they could not have come otherwise. Yet that marshal, a man

[1] On June 1, 1814, Berthier had been made Captain of the Fifth company of the King's Household Troops.

respected and revered by all who knew him, was summoned as much by public esteem as by Royal appointment to head the Council of State.[1] Count Shée, who was Prefect of Strasbourg at the time when those events took place—whose correspondence, alertness, and routine reports were what first drew the Government's attention to the plots against France and the First Consul that were being hatched on the right bank of the Rhine—Shée is a member of the Chamber of Peers.[2] And lastly, the King has for his Prime Minister that statesman[3] who in those days headed the Ministry for Foreign Affairs; the man who commissioned me to deliver a letter to the Minister of the Court of Baden—that same letter upon which malevolence would seek to base the slanders that are spread against me. That Minister also had the task of explaining and justifying the event in question to every other Court in Europe—wherefore all the agents of French diplomacy were charged with like communications.

It is a known fact, moreover, that General Ordener, who was my senior, could not have been under my orders. The draft of *the order* which he received is preserved in the Archives.[4] So, too, is his letter to the First Consul; and likewise the report rendered at the same time by the major commanding the *gendarmes* who arrested the Prince, and which we transmitted by General Ordener. Thus it is plainly seen that he had his

[1] Moncey, afterwards Duke of Conegliano, had been appointed Chief Inspector of Gendarmerie, December 3, 1802—a post which he still occupied at the time of Enghien's arrest. His appointment to the Council of State by the Count of Artois in 1814 has been mentioned above.

[2] Henri d'Alton, Count Shée (1739–1820) was Prefect of the Lower Rhine as of the 4th Vendémiaire of the year XI, at the epoch of the Enghien affair. He was created Peer of France on June 4, 1814.

[3] Talleyrand.

[4] This document, and all others pertaining to the question, were afterwards published in support of Napoleon's refutation of Fleury de Chabulon (cf. *Mémoires de Napoléon*, II and V, documents in evidence). All the documents here mentioned may be seen as published by Count Boulay de la Meurthe.

orders direct, that he was not acting under mine, and that our missions were separate and distinct.

My great fault, I repeat, was that I upheld the interests of France after April 11, and the Emperor's interests until the 31st of May; and that unlike so many others, I did not abandon those interests. Such conduct, as of course I realize, established me no claim whatever upon the King's goodwill. It did, however, leave me in possession of those privileges which were mine by right of honourable services rendered to France.

I will be pardoned for this digression into a matter of personal concern, because, as a public figure, I am a part of France. In attacking me, they did not strike at me alone: the principles of justice too sustained grave injury. What I have told is what I saw, heard, or knew. Being by duty impartial, and charitable by inclination, I have more frequently mitigated than stressed whatever might seem to reflect too harshly upon individuals. As for the course of conduct I pursued, I did my duty as I understood it—and to such effect that, if I were to find myself again in the same situation, I would do the same as I did then. If the calamity and betrayal of which I was a witness have rendered me unjust or too severe, I beg that the future readers of this journal will put themselves back into the epoch when I wrote it, will see what a situation it was in which France and the Emperor found themselves—and give a thought to the situation that was mine, confronting, as it were, those vast misfortunes face to face.

I did not make the campaigns of Italy and Egypt with the Emperor. On the Eighteenth of Brumaire I was a colonel, commanding the carabineers of the Army of the Rhine. I barely knew the First Consul, having met him a few times at the house of Mme. de Beauharnais while he was in command at Paris and I happened for the moment to be there. Only in passing was I with the Army of Italy, at the time of the battle of ,[1] when the siege of Mantua was raised, for I was sent as envoy to Venice directly afterwards, and thence to Constantinople. Under the Consulate, the

[1] Left blank in the manuscript.

First Consul called me from garrison and sent me to congratulate the Tsar Alexander upon his accession to the throne. I was then in Paris for twelve hours, and for the better part of a twelvemonth in Russia, where General Hédouville came to relieve me. On my return I was in Paris for only a week.

Although the First Consul had put me in the way of preferment, going so far as to enquire with interest what promotion I desired, I hastened to rejoin the carabineers. A month later he appointed me his aide-de-camp, and, while taking the waters at Wiesbaden, I was ordered to report to Paris. His having chosen me was all the more flattering because, since I had done nothing to solicit that honour, I was far from hopeful of receiving it. I afterwards learnt that my mission to Russia was due to the good word General Moreau had put in for me when speaking of the officers of his force, and to Talleyrand, whom I had had several occasions to see upon my return from Constantinople. I was constantly with the First Consul thereafter.

After I had been in his personal service for a short while, he divided the administration of his Household between Duroc and myself; and the Empire found us functioning in the same offices that we had discharged under the Consulate. The Emperor dealt generously and considerately with me at all times. Although he found my manner abrupt and my views too forthright, he yet put up with them, knowing that I never allowed them to show outside his presence. Whenever his subtle reasoning failed to change my mind, the censure and contradiction which he encountered in my speech would move him to say, "You repel the liking that I feel for you." Yet he knew that as a right-thinking man I was devoted to him; and his esteem for me was sufficient to prevent his seeking proofs of my loyalty in that affection which he sensed the lack of. This fair-mindedness was all the more to the Emperor's credit because he was by nature mistrustful. Even so, he judged men with a lofty detachment; and despite his preference for persons whom he could influence, he respected a certain measure of opposition.

The Emperor entrusted me with much business of State. I was his ambassador and his plenipotentiary. He had thought of me in connexion with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, when, at the time of the Empire's organization, it was his idea to make Talleyrand Lord High Chancellor of State, while making Cambacérès and Lebrun respectively Arch-Chancellor and Arch-Treasurer. He still wished to give me the portfolio at Erfurt. Finally, in 1813, in the hour of his vast reverses, he insisted upon my taking that Ministry. After repeated demands I was compelled to accede, for matters had become so grave by then that some courage was needed of the man who assumed any such responsibility. The right bank of the Rhine was overrun with hostile hordes; the very land of France was imperilled.

Thanks to the ever-moderate tone of my discourse, and to the fact that my pacific views were well known, I was regarded as the man for peace at that time, during the overtures that were made to the Emperor from Frankfort by the Allied Sovereigns. The Emperor Napoleon thought, moreover, that under those circumstances I could perhaps serve the nation's interests, and his own, better than another might do. He therefore insisted that I take over the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. My first word was No: the recollection of Prague was all I needed to warn me that where peace was concerned, the Emperor's fairest promises meant nothing. The desire to exalt France's renown and prosperity came ever into conflict with his best intentions and most peaceful resolves, and he was forever hoping to escape the necessity of subscribing to a peace that ran counter to his lifelong dreams. On the other hand, our country was about to be invaded. The Emperor was insistent, imperative—and I was led by the peril of the situation to undertake what I should otherwise have declined. The call of my country—yes, and of Europe too—made it my duty to accept. What took place at Châtillon did not make me lose heart, nor did the bitter trials of those days. When I rejoined the Emperor at Saint-Dizier I found him so wretched that I could think only of saving France and him, were that still possible.

These particulars are at once the record of my relations with the Emperor and the explanation of my conduct. I always served him loyally, and in all patriotism. In proportion as I had argued against his notions and his plans, being resolved to speak to him of nothing but peace, I felt myself in duty bound to remain loyal to him when everything had come to pass virtually as I had predicted.

I was unfeignedly sorry not to be able to accompany the Emperor, at least for the time being; but as I told him, there were still other griefs for me to comfort. He understood my motives, expressing his kind appreciation of them. And I venture to believe that I always justified his confidence in me; and that more than once in his adversity the Emperor Napoleon said: *Caulaincourt est un homme d'honneur!*

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